SOCIETY IN CHINA

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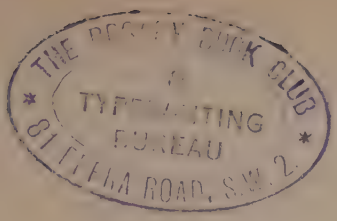

SOCIETY IN CHINA.

CHAPTER I.

THE EMPEROR AND THE COURT.

The title of this work may at first sight seem somewhat misleading; it may be taken to imply that there is a distinct difference between society of the present day in China, and that of an earlier period. This, however, is not the case; for, speaking generally, everything that is modern is ancient, and all that is ancient is modern. With the exception of fashions in trivial matters, nothing has changed in China for many centuries. Every institution, every custom, and every idea has its foundation in the distant ages and draws its inspiration from the sages of antiquity. Immutability in all that is essential, is written on the face of the empire. No fear of organic change perplexes monarchs, or any one else, in that changeless land, and the people love to have it so. Sovereigns reign and pass away, dynasties come and go, and even foreign powers take possession of the throne, as at the present time, when a line of Manchu emperors reigns at Peking; but the national life in all its

characteristics goes on unmoved by political change and revolutionary violence. One of the most remarkable spectacles in the world's history is that of this strange empire which, having been time after time thrown into the crucible of political unrest, has always reappeared identical in its main features and institutions, and absorbing rather than being absorbed by the foreign elements which have occasionally thrust themselves into the body politic.

The political constitution, the social relations and customary ceremonies were crystallized in their present forms by those ancients on whom, according to the opinion of the people, rested the mantle of perfect wisdom. If the death of the emperor is announced, it is proclaimed in words used by Yao, who lived before the time of Abraham. If a mandarin writes a controversial despatch, he bases his arguments on the sayings of Confucius; if a youth presents himself at the public examinations, he is expected to compose essays exclusively on themes from the four books and five classics of antiquity; and if a man writes to congratulate a friend on the birth of a daughter, he does so in phraseology drawn from the national primitive odes, which were sung and chanted before the days of Homer.

This immutability gives certain advantages in writing on Chinese society, since the author is not called upon

> "To shoot folly as it flies
> And catch the manners living as they rise."

It is enough for him to keep in view the rock from which the people have hewn their lives, and to

draw from the current literature, which reflects that foundation, the picture which he may propose to sketch.

What, then, are the constituent elements of Chinese society? They are very simple, and are free from the complications and enlacements of European life. At the head is the emperor and his court, next comes the bureaucracy, and after them the people. With the exception of some few families, such as those of Confucius, of Tsêng, the late minister at our court, and five or six others, there is no hereditary aristocracy of high rank and importance. All are equal until the examiners have elected into an aristocracy of talent those whose essays and poems are the best. The remaining divisions of "farmers, mechanics, and traders," represent one level.

Above these classes the emperor reigns supreme. The possessor of a power which is limited only by the endurance of the people, the object of profound reverence and worship by his subjects, the holder of the lives of "all under heaven," the fountain of honour as well as the dispenser of mercy, he occupies a position which is unique of its kind, and unmatched in the extent of its influence. There is much magic in a name, and the titles by which the potentate is known help us to realize what he is in the eyes of the people. He is the "Son of Heaven," he is the "Supreme Ruler," the "August Lofty One," the "Celestial Ruler," the "Solitary Man," the "Buddha of the present day," the "Lord;" and, in adulatory addresses, he is often entitled, the "Lord of Ten Thousand Years." As the Son of Heaven, he rules by the express command of the

celestial powers, and is sustained on the throne by the same supreme authorities, so long as he rules in accordance with their dictates. He alone is entitled to worship the azure heaven, and at the winter solstice he performs this rite after careful preparation, and with solemn ritual. The Temple of Heaven, where this august ceremony is performed, stands in the southern portion of the city of Peking, and consists of a triple circular terrace, two hundred and ten feet wide at the base, and ninety feet at the top. The marble stones forming the pavement of the highest terrace are laid in nine concentric circles. On the centre stone, which is a perfect circle, the emperor kneels, facing the north, and "acknowledges in prayer and by his position that he is inferior to Heaven, and to Heaven alone. Round him on the pavement are the nine circles of as many heavens, consisting of nine stones, then eighteen, then twenty-seven, and so on, in successive multiples of nine until the square of nine, the favourite number of Chinese philosophy, is reached in the outermost circle of eighty-one stones."*

On the evening before the winter solstice the emperor is borne in a carriage drawn by elephants to the mystic precincts of the temple, whence, after offering incense to Shangti, "the Supreme Ruler," and to his ancestors, he proceeds to the hall of penitential fasting. There he remains until 5.45 a.m., when, dressed in his sacrificial robes, he ascends to the second terrace. This is the signal for setting fire to the whole burnt sacrifice, which consists of a bullock of two years old and without blemish. The Supreme Ruler having been

* Williamson's "Journey in North China," vol. ii. p. 353.

thus invoked, the emperor goes up to the highest terrace, and offers incense before the sacred shrine, and that of his ancestors. At the same time, after having knelt thrice and prostrated himself nine times, he offers bundles of silk, jade cups, and other gifts in lowly sacrifice. A prayer is then read by an attendant minister, while the emperor kneels in adoration, to an accompaniment of music and dancing. One solemn rite has still to be performed before the sacrificial service is complete. While the emperor remains on his knees, officers appointed for the purpose present to him "the flesh of happiness," and the "cup of happiness." Thrice he prostrates himself before the sacred emblems, and then receives them with solemn reverence. It is curious to find these marked resemblances to Jewish and Christian worship in the Chinese ritual.

By this solemn sacrifice the emperor assumes the office of Vice-regent of Heaven, and by common consent is acknowledged to be the co-ordinate of Heaven and earth, and the representative of man in the trinity of which those two powers form the other persons. As possessor of the Divine authority, he holds himself superior to all who are called gods, and takes upon himself to grant titles of honour to deities, and to promote them in the sacred hierarchy. Not long since a memorial was presented to the throne by the lieutenant-governor of Kiang-su, asking the emperor to confer higher honours on the Queen of Heaven, the God of the Wind, the God of the Sea, and the God of the city of Shanghai, in consideration of their having brought the tribute rice safely on its way to Tientsin, and for having favoured the vessels bearing it with gentle zephyrs

and a placid sea. To this request the emperor was pleased to accede, and the gods and goddesses reaped the reward of his benignity by the issue of patents which were held to vouch for their promotion on the heights of Olympus.

One other instance of this form of superstition may be mentioned which is remarkable as having for its advocate the redoubtable Tsêng Kwofan, the father of the Marquis Tsêng, and the foremost man of the day in the empire. To him, more than to any other mandarin, is due the suppression of the T'aip'ing rebellion. He was the intimate adviser of the throne, and was held in the highest esteem as a learned and enlightened man. It is interesting to see, therefore, to what a depth of superstition the learned and enlightened men of China are capable of descending. This viceroy, in conjunction with the Viceroy of Fuhkien, "petitioned the throne to deify two female genii who had worked a great number of miracles for the good of the people. In the district of Chiangtu," write the viceroys, "there is a place called Hsien-nü-chên, which has long had a temple to the two genii, Tu and Kang. This temple was once upon a time the scene of a beneficent miracle which is duly recorded in the history of the district. . . . Moreover in the eighth year of Hsienfêng (1858), when the T'aip'ing rebels were attempting to cross on rafts at Fuchiao, on the east side of Yangchow, a frightful storm of thunder and rain burst over the place and drowned countless numbers of them. The refugees from the city all stated that, on the night in question, when the rebels were attempting to cross, they saw the opposite bank lined, as far as the eye could

reach, with bright azure-coloured lamps, and in the midst of the lamps were seen the fairy goddesses. Scared by this apparition the rebels abandoned the attempt, and the town and neighbourhood were saved from falling into their hands. Some time ago," the memorialists add, "Tsêng Kwofan . . . petitioned the throne to deify the two female genii, Tu and Kang; but the Board of Rites replied that the local histories only mention Kang, and asked what authority there was for ranking Tu among the genii. The memorialists have, therefore, re-investigated the whole case, and find that Kang was a priestess in Tu's temple, and that she ascended from the town in question on a white dragon up to fairyland, and that in consequence of this the inhabitants placed her on a par with Tu and worshipped them together. . . . The names of the fairies, Tu and Kang, are to be found in the official registers, and they have long been objects of worship. . . . Such are the representations of the local gentry and elders, and the memorialists would earnestly repeat their request that his majesty would be graciously pleased to deify the two genii, Tu and Kang, in acknowledgment of the many deliverances they have wrought, and in compliance with the earnest wish of the people" (*Peking Gazette*, for January 29th, 1872). In the pages of the *Peking Gazette*, such memorials, presented by the highest officials in the empire, are constantly to be met with, and are treated with all seriousness both by the suppliants and the Son of Heaven.

In harmony with these lofty attributes his subjects, when admitted into his presence, prostrate themselves in adoration on the ground before him,

and on a certain day in the year he is worshipped in every city in the empire. At daylight on the day in question the local mandarins assemble in the city temple, where, in the central hall, a throne is raised on which is placed the imperial tablet. At a given signal the assembled officials kneel thrice before the throne, and nine times strike their heads on the ground as though in the presence of the Supreme Ruler. In speaking of this title, the Supreme Ruler, it is interesting to go a step beyond the English rendering of the term, and to look at the native characters which represent it. They are read 皇帝, Hwangti, and are of considerable interest both as indicating the very lofty idea entertained by the inventors of the first character of what an emperor should be; and, in the case of the second, as confirming a theory which is now commonly accepted, that the Chinese borrowed a number of their written symbols from the cuneiform writing of Babylonia. The character *Hwang* was formerly made up of two parts, meaning "ruler" and "one's self," and thus conveys the very laudable notion, in harmony with the doctrines taught by Confucius, that an emperor, before attempting to rule the empire, should have learnt to be the master of his own actions. In the same spirit Mencius, about two hundred years later, said, "The greatest charge is the charge of one's self." An idea which appears in the mouth of Polonius, where he says—

> "This above all: to thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man."

By a clerical error the character is now written

with the omission of a stroke in the symbol for one's self, and, so altered, the compound reads 皇, "the white ruler." The second character has been a perennial puzzle to Chinese etymologists. It means "the supreme," and is, as has been pointed out by Professor Terrien de Lacouperie, nothing more nor less than the eight-pointed star with which all readers of cuneiform inscriptions are familiar, and which exactly bears that signification.

The emperor is also the Buddha of the present day. This is a title which has little meaning among the sceptical Chinese, who agree with Confucius in preferring to leave the question of a future existence unexplored. But in the weary wastes of Mongolia and Tibet, the ignorant natives give an interest to their dreary existences by blindly following the superstitious teaching of their priests. In Tibet, more especially, Buddhism has gained complete possession of the people, and the priestly profession is crowded with men who seek for power, and who find it easier to make a living out of the superstitious fears of the people than from the barren soil at their feet. Not content with managing the spiritual concerns of their followers, these men have made themselves masters of the political situation, and in the hand of their chief, the Grand Lama, rests the government of the country. To these people the title of the "Buddha of the present day" is full of meaning, and a command from the potentate at Peking is readily obeyed as coming from the suzerain of the land, and the spiritual head of their religion. The Grand Lama and the several dignitaries by whom he is surrounded, are regarded as avatars of Bōddhisattvas. On the

death of any one of these ecclesiastics the re-embodiment of his spiritual essence is referred to Peking, and is not considered valid until the sanction of the emperor has been received. On occasions the emperor actually forbids the transmigration of the soul of any dignitary who may be under his ban, which thus remains in a state of suspended animation during his good pleasure. Not long since, the *Peking Gazette* tells us, one such, a Hut'ukht'u, was impeached for deserting his post, and carrying off his seal of office, in consequence of a disturbance which arose through a distribution of alms. For this dereliction of duty his title and seal were cancelled, and it was at the same time decreed by the emperor that his soul should not be allowed to transmigrate at his decease. On receiving this extinguishing sentence the offender came to Peking for the purpose of appealing, and soon afterwards his death produced the crisis in his spiritual state which the sentence contemplated. The sympathy produced by his parlous condition prompted the despatch of petitions to Peking to plead for his soul, and such success attended them that an edict was shortly afterwards issued in the following terms: "We decree that as is besought of us, search may be made to discover the child in whose body the soul of the deceased Hut'ukht'u has been re-born, and that he be allowed to resume the government of his proper lamasery." *

The title of "the solitary man" is eminently applicable to a potentate who thus not only claims temporal dominion, but who assumes the position of high priest over the household of the gods. It

* *Translation of Peking Gazette*, March 31, 1877.

is a common complaint with emperors and kings that they have no fellows; but here is one of their number whose cherished attributes place him beyond the reach of mortals. With the exception of those immediately about his person, his subjects are not allowed to gaze upon his face. When he goes abroad the people are compelled to fall on their faces to the ground until his cavalcade has passed on, and on all occasions he is to them a mystery. A sovereign so exalted and so worshipped would naturally expect to receive from foreigners entering his presence, homage equal to that to which he is accustomed from the pliant knees of his subjects, and at first, no doubt, the refusal of British representatives to *kot'ow* before him, came as a surprise. From the time of Lord Macartney's mission, in 1792, down to a few years back, the question of the *kot'ow* was a burning one, and was as consistently resisted by foreign ministers as it was urgently pressed by the Chinese. At the present time, on the two or three occasions on which the European ministers have been granted audiences, they have paid the emperor the same reverence, and no more, that they pay to their own sovereigns.

Being so entirely withdrawn from the public gaze, very little can possibly be known of the emperor's private life, and we are driven to that very candid periodical, the *Peking Gazette*, and to the plays and novels of the people, for sketches of his monotonous and dreary existence. The palace, as befitting the abode of so exalted a personage, is so placed as effectually to cut off its occupants from the rest of the empire. Situated in the "Forbidden City," it is surrounded with a triple barrier

of walls. Beyond the inner and arcane enclosure is the imperial city, which is enclosed by a high wall topped with tiles of the imperial yellow colour; and outside that again is the Tartar city, which forms the northern part of the capital. Strict guard is kept day and night at the gates of the Forbidden City, and severe penalties are inflicted on all unauthorized persons who may dare to enter its portals. One of the highest distinctions which can be conferred on officials whom the emperor delights to honour, is the right to ride on horseback within these sacred precincts. Only on rare occasions, and those almost exclusively occasions of ceremony, does the emperor pass out of the palace grounds. These no doubt present a microcosm of the empire. There are lakes, mountains, parks, and gardens in which the imperial prisoner can amuse himself, with the boats which ply on the artificial water, or by joining mimic hunts in miniature forests; but it is probable that there is not one of the millions of China who has not a more practical knowledge of the empire than he who rules it. Theoretically he is supposed to spend his days and nights in the affairs of state. The gates of the Forbidden City are opened at midnight, and the halls of audience at 2 a.m. Before daylight his cabinet ministers arrive and are received at veritable levees, and all the state sacrifices and functions are over by 10 o'clock. Even the court amusements are held before the dew is off the grass. The following programme, taken from the *Peking Gazette*, describes a morning's work at Court:—

"To-morrow, after business, about six o'clock a.m., the emperor will pass through the Hwa-Yuen

and Shinwu gates to the Takaotien temple to offer sacrifice. Afterwards His Majesty will pass through the Yung-suy-tsiang gate, and, entering the King-shansi gate, will proceed to the Show-hwang temple to worship. His Majesty will then pass through the Pehshang gate from the Sishan road, and, entering the Shinwu gate, will return to the palace to breakfast. His Majesty will then hold an audience, and at seven o'clock will ascend to the K'ientsing Palace to receive congratulations on his birthday. At eight o'clock he will take his seat to witness the theatrical performance."

Fancy Irving and Ellen Terry going down to Windsor to perform at so deadening a time as eight o'clock a.m.! And if wrestlers and conjurers are summoned into the Imperial presence, they must be ready at an equally uncongenial hour to show their skill.

But such relaxations are the glints of sunlight which brighten the sombre life of the solitary man. The present sovereign is twenty-three years old, or, according to our reckoning, twenty-two years. He, or more accurately his advisers, announced his assumption of the imperial purple in 1875, when he was quite an infant, in the following edict:—

"Whereas, on the fifth day of the moon" (Jan. 12, 1875), "at the *yco* hour" (5–7 p.m.), "His Majesty the Emperor departed this life, ascending upon the Dragon to be a guest on high, the benign mandate of the Empress Dowager and Empress Mother was by us reverently received, commanding us to enter upon the inheritance of the great succession. Prostrate upon the earth we bewailed our grief to Heaven, vainly stretching out our hands

in lamentation. For thirteen years, as we humbly reflected, His Majesty now departed reigned under the canopy of Heaven. In reverent observance of the ancestral precepts, he made the counsels prompted by maternal love his guide, applying himself with awestruck zeal to the toilsome performance of his duty. . . . The welfare of the people and the policy of the state were ever present in his inmost thoughts. . . . Not in words can we give expression to the sadness which pierces our hearts and shows itself in tears of blood."

The *Peking Gazette* bears testimony to the desire which was felt by the emperor's tutors to rear the tender thought aright. And in that journal the following memorial on this subject was published with approval. "His Majesty, being still of tender age, it is beyond question expedient that effectual training in the right path be studied. All those who surround His Majesty, and are in near employment about his person, should be without exception of tried capacity and solid character. No youthful and thoughtless person should be suffered to be in attendance." From time to time the outer world was informed of the progress which this tenderly guarded youth was making in his studies. At last the time came—in 1889—for him to assume the reins of power hitherto held by the dowager empresses, and to take to himself a consort. The question of choosing a wife for the imperial recluse was a more serious matter to arrange than the transfer of power. It was necessary that the lady should be of the same nationality as himself—a Manchu—and that she should satisfy the requirements of the dowager empresses as to looks and

appearance. Levees of aspirants to the honour were held by the dowagers, and a lady having been chosen, the personage most interested in the event was made aware of the selection. According to custom, and possibly to provide against any disappointment which the appearance of the bride might produce in the imperial breast, two young ladies were also chosen to accompany the empress as secondary wives. This trio forms the nucleus of the royal household. As time goes on their number will probably be added to, and, if the precedent set by some emperors be followed, the supplementary ladies will be counted by tens and fifties. As is natural in the case of any matter affecting so exalted a personage as the Son of Heaven, the ceremonies connected with his marriage are marked by all the dignity and splendour which are peculiar to Oriental states. Unlike his subjects, even of the highest rank, who are bound as a preliminary to pay court to the parents of their future brides, the emperor finds it sufficient to issue an edict announcing his intention to marry the lady on whom his choice may have fallen, and she, trembling with the weight of the honour, blushingly obeys the command. Unlike his subjects, also, the emperor is by law entitled to wives of three ranks. The first consists of the empress, who is alone in her dignity except when, as has happened, on some rare occasions, two princesses have shared the imperial throne. The second rank is unlimited as to number; and it is from these ladies that, in case of the death of the empress, the emperor commonly choses her successor. The third rank is filled up as the taste of the emperor may direct, and it is

rarely that the ladies of this grade ever succeed to the lofty dignity of the throne.

To the wedding of the empress alone are reserved the courtly ceremonials which grace the imperial marriage. These ceremonies are ten in number. First comes an edict announcing the intended marriage. The Board of Ceremonies next proclaims the fact throughout the empire, and having consulted the imperial astronomers as to the choice of a fortunate day for sending the customary presents to the bride elect, prepares for the occasion ten horses with accoutrements, ten cuirasses, a hundred pieces of silk, and two hundred pieces of nanking. To the Board of Rites belongs the duty of preparing a golden tablet and a golden seal on which the scholars of the Hanlin College inscribe the necessary decrees relating to the marriage. Armed with these imperial pledges a President of the Board invites the imperial order for the presentation of the gifts. When this has been received, the officials, at early dawn on the day appointed, place a table in the hall of "Great Harmony" for the reception of the imperial seal, while others set out a pavilion ornamented with dragons, in which the cuirasses, the silks, and the cloths are reverently deposited. When the assembly is complete, the master of ceremonies orders every one to his allotted place, and exhorts all to assume a grave and decorous attitude. In the hearing of this attentive gathering a commissioner, after bowing the knee, reads aloud the imperial mandate, which runs as follows:— "The august ruler has, in accordance with the wishes of the revered dowager empress, promised

to take Miss —— of the family —— as his consort, and orders the ministers to take the seal of the empire with the nuptial presents, in accordance with the sacred rites." So soon as the herald has ceased speaking a Secretary of State takes the seal from the table and hands it to an imperial messenger who, in company with officials carrying the pavilion and other gifts, and preceded and followed by the imperial guards, goes to the house of the future empress. Everything there has been prepared for his reception. A table has been placed in the centre of the hall between two others, draped with appropriate hangings. On the arrival of the messenger the father of the lady salutes him on the threshold, and kneels while he carries the imperial gifts to the tables in the great hall. On the centre table the envoy places the imperial seal, and on the others the various portable presents, while the horses are arranged on the right and left of the courtyard. When all are disposed in order, the father of the lady receives the gifts kneeling, and prostrates himself nine times, as a token of his gratitude for the imperial favour. The departure of the messenger, who carries the imperial seal away with him, is surrounded with the same ceremonies as those which greeted his arrival.

Two banquets form the second part of the ceremony. The mother of the bride is, by order of the emperor, entertained by the imperial princesses in the apartments of the dowager empress, while the imperial chamberlains and high officials offer the same hospitality to her father.

On the wedding-day officers appointed for the

purpose present to the bride two hundred ounces of gold, ten thousand ounces of silver, one gold and two silver tiaras, a thousand pieces of silk, twenty caparisoned horses, and twenty others with equipments. To her father and mother are in like manner offered gold, silver, and precious ornaments; pieces of silk, bows and arrows, and countless robes.

The declaration of the marriage follows. An ambassador is sent with an imperial letter to the father of the future empress. On his knees, this much genuflecting man listens to the words of his future son-in-law, and makes nine prostrations in the direction of the imperial seal, which again stands on his table. On this occasion his wife and two ladies of his household take part in the ceremony. Six times they bow low, thrice they bend the knee, and twice as often they prostrate themselves before the seal. This done, they receive from the envoy the tablet of gold, on which is inscribed the declaration of marriage, and retire with this evidence of the fulfilment of their hopes to the apartments of the bride.

On the eve of the eventful day ministers are sent to announce the auspicious event to Heaven, and Earth, and to the deities of the imperial temple. On the following morning, so soon as the august procession is formed, the emperor enters his sedan-chair, and is borne to the Tzŭning palace, where the dowager empress awaits him seated on a throne of state. With dutiful regard he kneels, and thrice, and again nine times bows low at the feet of his mother. Having thus manifested his respect, he proceeds to the "Hall of Great Harmony," accom-

panied by bands discoursing music from an infinite variety of instruments. There, at a signal given, the members of the Board of Rites kneel and prostrate themselves before their august sovereign. This done, a herald advances and reads aloud the imperial decree, which runs as follows: "The emperor, in obedience to the desire of the empress his mother, agrees that the princess —— shall be his consort. In this propitious month, and under this favourable constellation, he has prepared the customary gifts and the usual contract, and now commands his ministers to escort the chosen bride to his palace." In harmony with this last clause, the imperial envoy, followed by chamberlains and officers of the guard, and accompanied with music, takes the great seal and starts on his mission. Following in his train come officers carrying the tablet and seal of gold, and bearers with the sedan-chair destined for the bride. In strange contrast to the ordinary state of the streets, the thoroughfares on this occasion are swept, garnished, and made straight. On arriving, over these unwontedly smooth ways, at the dwelling of the bride, the envoy is received with every mark of honour and reverence, not only by the father of the bride, but by the elder ladies of the household, dressed in their most brilliant costumes. In the grand hall the father kneels before the envoy, who hands the seal to a lady in waiting, while his lieutenant delivers the tablet and the imperial letter to the ladies appointed to receive them. As these things are borne to the private apartments of the bride, her mother and ladies kneel in token of reverence, and then, following in their wake, listen with

devout respect to the terms of the letter addressed to the bride.

When this ceremony is concluded, the bride, with her mother and ladies in attendance, advances to the "Phœnix Chair," in which, preceded by ministers bearing the imperial seal, and followed by musicians and guards of honour, she proceeds to the palace. On arriving at the gate, the officers and attendants dismount from their horses, while porters bearing aloft nine umbrellas ornamented with phœnixes lead the procession to the Kien-tsing gate. Beyond this the attendants and officials are forbidden to go, and the bride proceeds alone to meet her affianced husband. One more ceremony has to be performed to complete the marriage. A banquet is spread for the august pair, at which they pledge each other's troth in cups of wine, and thus tie the knot which death alone unravels. This, however, does not quite conclude the laborious ceremonial which falls to the lot of the bride. On the morning after the wedding it becomes her duty to testify her respect to the dowager empress by bringing her water in which to wash her hands, and by spreading viands before her, in return for which courtesies the dowager entertains her daughter-in-law at a feast of welcome. Meanwhile the emperor receives the homage of the princes, dukes, and officers of state, and for some days the palace is given up to feasting and rejoicing—an echo of which reaches the remotest parts of the empire when the proclamation announcing the joyful event is made known in the provinces.

But the imperial mentors not only teach the

emperor how to live, but they teach the "still harder lesson, how to die." On the approaching death of the late emperor, the following valedictory manifesto was put in his mouth :—

"It was owing to the exalted love of Our late Imperial father, Our canopy and support, that the Divine Vessel (*i.e.* the throne) was bestowed upon Our keeping. Having set foot in Our childhood on the throne, We from that moment had, gazing upwards, to thank their two majesties the empresses for that, in ordering as Regents the affairs of government, they devoted night and day to the laborious task. When, later, in obedience to their divine commands, We personally assumed the supreme power, We looked on high for guidance to the Ancestral precepts of the Sacred Ones before Us, and in devotion to Our government and love towards Our people, made the fear of Heaven and the example of Our Forefathers the mainspring of every act . . . To be unwearied day by day has been Our single purpose. . . . Our bodily constitution has through Our life been strong, and when, in the 11th moon of this year, We were attacked by smallpox, We gave the utmost care to the preservation of our health; but for some days past Our strength has gradually failed, until the hope of recovery has passed away. We recognize in this the will of Heaven." And then the dying man named his successor in the person of his first cousin, the present emperor.

So soon as the august patient has ceased to breathe, his heir strips from his cap the ornaments which adorn it, and "wails and stamps" in evidence of his excessive grief. The widow and ladies of

the harem in the same way discard the hair-pins and jewellery which it is ordinarily their delight to wear, and show their practical appreciation of the position by setting to work to make the mourning clothes and habiliments. The coffin prepared for the remains having been carried into the principal hall of the palace, is inspected by the heir, and receives its august burden. By an ordinance, which is probably more honoured in the breach than in the observance, the new emperor with his courtiers sacrifice their queues as a token of their sorrow, and the ladies of the harem, not to be outdone, submit their flowing locks to the scissors of their attendants. For three years, which by a fiction is reduced to twenty-seven months, the young emperor mourns the decease of his predecessor. The exigencies of administration, however, make it necessary that he should confine the period of unrestrained grief to a hundred days; while twenty-seven days are considered sufficient for the expression of the regrets of the concubines of the third rank. During the twenty-seven months members of the imperial family are not supposed to marry or indulge in any of the pleasures of married life. A curious punishment was inflicted on a late emperor for an infraction of this last rule. Most inopportunely a son was born to him at a time which proved that, in accordance with Chinese notions, its existence must have begun during the mourning for the deceased emperor. The question then arose how the august offender was to be dealt with. Banishment would have been the sentence naturally passed on any less exalted personage, but as it was plainly impossible to send the Son of Heaven into exile,

it was determined to banish his portrait across the deserts of Mongolia into a far country.

On a day of good omen the will of the deceased emperor is carried, with much pomp and circumstance, to the gate of "Heavenly Rest." From the balcony above this portal the contents of the document are announced to the assembled crowd. The terms of the testament having been communicated to the people of the capital, it is printed in yellow, and distributed not only throughout the empire, but throughout every region which owes allegiance to the Son of Heaven—Corea, Mongolia, and Manchuria, and Liuchiu, and Annam. When the time named by the astrologers arrives for the removal of the coffin to the temporary palace on the hill within the imperial enclosure, a procession, formed of all that is great and noble in the empire, accompanies the imperial remains to their appointed resting-place, where, with every token of respect, they are received by the empress and the ladies of the harem.

In a mat shed adjoining the temporary palace the emperor takes up his abode for twenty-seven days. With unremitting attention he presents fruits and viands to the deceased, accompanying them with sacrificial libations and prayers. The choice of a posthumous title next occupies the attention of the ministers, and from that moment the names which the late sovereign has borne in life disappear from imperial cognizance. To every emperor are given, during life, and at his death, three names. The first may be called his personal name; the second is assigned him on coming to he throne, and resembles the titles given to the

occupants of the papal chair; the third is the style chosen to commemorate his particular virtues or those which he is supposed to have possessed. The late emperor, for example, was known in his pre-imperial days as Tsaish'un. When he mounted the throne he accepted the title of T'ung-chi, "universal government," and when he ascended on high he was canonized as Muhtsung I Hwangti, "The Reverent Ancestor," "The Resolute Sovereign." So soon as the posthumous title has been decided upon it is engraved upon a tablet and seal; and in order that the spiritual powers should be made acquainted with the style adopted, especially appointed ministers announce the newly chosen epithet to Heaven, and Earth, and to the gods of the land and of grain. On the completion of these long-drawn-out ceremonies a day is chosen for the removal of the coffin to its tomb. In a wooded valley, forty or fifty miles west of Peking, lie all that is mortal of the emperors of the present dynasty. Thither, by easy stages, the coffin, borne by countless bearers, is carried, over a road levelled and carefully prepared for the *cortège*. As in duty bound, the emperor accompanies the coffin, but does not find it necessary to join in the actual procession. By pursuing devious ways he reaches the travelling palaces, at which the halts are made, in time to receive the coffin, and without having experienced the fatigue of the slow and dreary march. Finally, with many and minute ceremonies, among which occurs the presentation to the deceased of food, money, and clothes, the remains are laid to rest in the august company of imperial shades.

With much the same pomp and ceremonial a

deceased empress is buried in the sacred precincts, and the proclamation of her death is received in the provinces with much the same demonstrations of grief and sorrow, as that which greets the announcement of the decease of a Son of Heaven. Some years ago, on the death of the empress dowager, a curious proclamation, prescribing the rites to be performed on the occasion, was issued to the people of Canton. From this paper we learn that the notification of the death was received from the hands of the imperial messenger by the assembled local officials, and was borne on the "dragon bier" to the Examination Hall. As the procession moved along the officers fell on their knees and, looking upwards, raised a cry of lamentation. On reaching the precincts of the Hall the mandarins, from the highest to the lowest, thrice bowed low, and nine times struck their foreheads on the ground. So soon as the notification had been placed on the table prepared for it, the herald cried aloud, "Let all raise the cry of lamentation." Anon, the same officer proclaimed, "Present the notification," upon which the officer appointed for the purpose presented the paper to the governor-general and governor of the province, who received it on their knees and handed it to the provincial treasurer, who, in like manner, passed it to the secretary charged with the duty of seeing that it was reverently copied and published abroad. At another word of command the mandarins retired to a public hall, where they passed the night abstaining from meat and from all carnal indulgence. For three days similar ceremonies and lamentations were

performed, and for nine times that period white apparel was donned by the mandarins, who had already discarded the tassels and buttons of their caps on the first arrival of the imperial messenger. From the same date all official signatures were written with blue ink, and seals were impressed with the same colour. No drums were beaten, no courts were held, and a blue valance was hung from the chair and table of all officers in lieu of the ordinary red one. On each of the first three days a state banquet was offered to the deceased, when, in the presence of the assembled mandarins, the herald cried aloud, "Serve tea to Her Majesty." Upon which attendants, preceded by the governor-general and governor, ascended the dais, and, kneeling, poured out a cup of tea, which they handed to the governor-general. With every token of respect this officer placed the cup before the tablet representing the late empress. With the same ceremonies rice, water, and wine were offered to the manes of the deceased empress. Finally, at a word from the herald, the viands were committed to the flame, and with prostrations and bows the ceremony came to an end.*

Such is the side of the shield presented to us in the pages of the *Peking Gazette*. It represents a cloistered virtue which, even if genuine, we should admire more if it sallied out to seek its adversaries. Probably, however, a truer presentment of the inner life of the palace is to be found in the native novels and plays, where the natural effects of confining the Son of Heaven within the narrow limits of the Forbidden City, and of depriving him of all those

* Wade's "State of China," 1850–51 (privately printed).

healthy exercises which foster a sound mind in a sound body, are described as resulting from the system. It can only be men of the strongest will and keenest intellects, who would not rust under such conditions, and these qualities are possessed as rarely by emperors as by ordinary persons. For the most part we see the emperor portrayed as surrounded by sycophants and worse than sycophants, who fawn upon him and add flattery to adulation in their attempts to gain and to hold his favour. Enervated by luxury, he, in a vast majority of cases, falls a ready victim to these blandishments, and rapidly degenerates into a weak and flabby being. It is true that occasionally some hardy Son of Heaven enjoys a long reign, but the more common course of events is that a short and inglorious rule is brought to a premature close by the effects of debauchery and inanition.

The grandfather of the reigning sovereign ascended upon a "dragon to be a guest on high" at the age of thirty, a decrepit and worn-out old man, and the present ruler is the fifth who has sat upon the throne during this century. In so complicated an administrative machine as that of China it is difficult to say what part the emperor really takes in the government of the country. We know that some have been powerful for good and many more for evil. At the hands of the emperor K'ienlung, Lord Macartney, at the end of last century, received a courteous welcome, and the promise of advantageous commercial relations; while Lord Amherst was dismissed with an abruptness which almost amounted to insult by his successor, Kiak'ing, under whose sway every privilege which

up to that time had been enjoyed by foreigners at Canton was either curtailed or withdrawn. The action of this last sovereign was not, however, any sign of vigour. To persecute foreigners is, unhappily, such a congenial task to the majority of mandarins, that it need only be intimated that the emperor is on the side of the aggressors to insure a ready attack on the settlements.

Over the imperial princes and nobles the emperor holds complete sway. He regulates their marriages, and in cases of failure of issue he chooses sons for their adoption. He appoints their retinues, and orders all their goings with curious minuteness. Over them, as over all his other subjects, his will is, theoretically, law. No Indian Rajah, no Shah of Persia, ever possessed more autocratic power. We have some knowledge of the debasing effect of eastern palace life from the histories of the better known countries of Asia, and we may safely draw the deduction that, since the same conditions produce the same effects, the records of the Forbidden City would, if written at length, reflect, *mutatis mutandis*, the normal condition of society in the old palace of Delhi or the Diwan-khaneh-i-Shah at Teheran.

As has already been said, the hereditary aristocrats of rank and importance form but a small and unimportant body, while the lower grades are well supplied with men who have earned distinction in the battle-field and in other arenas of honour. For example, the man who was first to mount the wall of Nanking when it was recaptured from the rebels was rewarded by a title of the fourth rank. To all such distinguished persons annual

allowances are made, and though individually small in amount, the total sum becomes a serious burden on the provincial exchequers, when by imperial favour the number of those holding patents of nobility is multiplied. Not long since the governor of Kiang-si complained that he had to provide 50,000 taels a year for the incomes of the four hundred and eighty-three hereditary nobles residing within his jurisdiction. This number he considered to be quite large enough, and he begs his imperial master to abstain from throwing any more nobles on the provincial funds. In Hunan the number, he alleges, is confined to four hundred, in Nanking to three hundred and forty-eight, in Soochow to a hundred and fifty, and in Anhui to a hundred and seventy-six. Beyond these areas his investigations had not travelled.

In an interesting note to his "State of China" (1850–51) (privately printed), Sir Thomas Wade thus writes on the subject of Chinese peerages: "The hereditary nobility of China may be divided into the imperial and national. Of the former there are twelve denominations which, with certain subdivisions, extend over eighteen classes of persons ennobled because of their descent. These are, of course, under the present dynasty, exclusively Manchus. The members of the national nobility may be Manchus or Chinese elevated for their merits to one of nine degrees. The five superior of these, viz.: Kung, Hou, Pih, Tzŭ, Nan, we English in general describe by duke, marquis, earl, viscount, and baron; the remaining four, for convenience sake, we call orders of knighthood. The highest of these and the five above specified are

each divided into first, second, and third classes, making in all twenty-six degrees. Unless the title given be conferred in perpetuity it loses one degree of nobility with each step of descent. Thus the Kung, duke, of the first class will reach the lowest round in twenty-six generations; the first class Tzŭ, viscount, in fourteen. There are some limitations to this rule; but, in any case, when the title is nominally in perpetuity, renewal of the patent of creation has to be requested, nor does the heir, either of imperial or of national honours, assume his title without such resuscitation of his privileges."

The inestimable advantages which Confucius has, by his moral system, conferred upon his countrymen, are justly recognized by a special decree, which confers the rank of Kung on his male representative. So deeply ingrained is the respect for the sage, both amongst Chinese and Manchus, that this hereditary title was the only one recognized and maintained by the founder of the present dynasty. The present holder of the title is seventy-fifth in descent from his great ancestor, and enjoys, as his predecessors have done before him, a very substantial endowment. A large grant of land, on which stands a district city, is attached to the title. Eight-tenths of the inhabitants of this town are of the same stock as himself, and by these, in common with his other subjects, he is treated with the most profound respect.

Another duke, the representative of the last emperor of the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644), is not so fortunately provided for. In place of the land and wealth of his colleague, he has the empty honour of presenting himself before the emperor at

stated intervals. The present owner of the title is, or was, a curd seller, and accepted with very bad grace the blushing honour thrust upon him by the successors of those who supplanted his ancestors on the throne. It is with much difficulty that he can be prevailed upon to present himself at Peking on the required occasions, and so soon as his kot'ow is performed he hurries back to his counter.

Of the next rank of Hou, or marquis, is the grandson of the celebrated Ts'eng Kwofan, the father of the late Minister at this Court, whose interest in the apotheosis of fairies is evidenced by the memorial quoted above. Others there are, but they are men of less note and consideration.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOVERNMENT.

THE nobles have nothing necessarily to do with the administration of the empire, which is entirely in the hands of those men whom, following the Portuguese term, we know as mandarins. These officers belong to the people, and, in theory at least, owe their position to their success at the examination halls. As, however, in every other system in China, custom makes strange inroads into this virtuous arrangement. It often happens that the country is subjected to great national disasters. Crops fail, or the Yellow River floods thousands of square miles bordering on its treacherous banks. The Government, with every desire to help the sufferers, finds that it has no funds with which to gratify its generous instincts. It appeals to the country, and rich men, who have made their fortunes as farmers of the salt monopoly, or in some other branch of trade, come forward to supply the necessary money. They are commonly rewarded on a sliding scale in accordance with the amounts of their donations. The most liberal contributors get high official rank and office, while those who can give little have to content themselves with the lower grades. It is reckoned that one-half of the mandarins of the

empire have gained their positions by this species of purchase.

For administrative purposes the empire is divided into eighteen provinces, many of which are as large as European kingdoms. Fifteen of these provinces are grouped into eight vice-royalties, while the remaining three are administered by governors. Each province is autonomous, and the viceroy or governor is allowed a free hand so long as he preserves order and forwards with regularity the annual quota of his taxes to Peking. He raises his own land and naval forces, and is practically a king within the limits of his rule. The central government is content to see that he carries out the general instructions laid down for his guidance, and considers that viceroy is most successful of whom it hears least. The responsibility thus thrown upon him makes him very watchful over his subordinates, of whose faults and failings he is an unsparing critic. The *Peking Gazette* bears constant evidence of the official crimes of provincial underlings. This man is extortionate; that man is an inveterate opium smoker; a third spends his time in drinking wine and playing chess, while the people in vain demand his intervention in their affairs; a fourth employs illegal torture to extract confessions; a fifth leaves untried prisoners to rot in jail year after year; and so the record runs on, covering every delinquency which is likely to swell the usually placid souls of the people to rage and riot. The degree in which peace is preserved is the test which is applied to actions of the mandarins.

They may indulge in the pleasant vices, and may fill their pockets, as most of them do, by illegal

exactions and by the sale of justice, so long as they maintain order and quiet among those over whom they are set. Such faults as they possess lie gently on them; and as bribery and corruption are, with very few exceptions, common to all, from the highest to the lowest, there is naturally a conspiracy of silence on those subjects in which all are alike guilty. Should it be forced on the knowledge of a high mandarin that his subordinates are battening on the people, he charitably assumes that their stars are more in fault than they, so long as no *émeute* is likely to arise from their evil actions. But if circumstances compel him to visit on them the penalties of their misdeeds, he does so with no sparing hand. Double motives urge him on to severity. The instant dismissal of a maladroit official often saves his own post, and in nine cases out of ten it secures him a substantial financial gain. The one object of the dismissed mandarin is to work his way back to office, and the readiest way to attain this is by bribing his superior to reinstate him. Large sums are often paid in this way, and lately as much as twenty thousand taels were paid for this purpose by a dismissed magistrate.

In extenuation of this state of things it is only fair to say that the salaries awarded to the mandarins are not sufficient, even with the exercise of the severest economy, to provide for the necessary expenses pertaining to their offices. So fully recognized is this fact that, in addition to the legal salary, each mandarin receives an anti-extortion allowance, which in most cases is about thirty times as large as the salary. Even with this addition, however, the incomes are disproportionately low, and are

quite inadequate to support the dignity of the service. A viceroy, for example, receives about £6000 a year, a sum which does not do much more than pay the countless clerks, secretaries, messengers, and hangers-on who crowd his yamun, and all of whom are entirely dependent on his private purse. In this condition of affairs, the mandarins are compelled to derive from the people under them the difference between the amount which they receive from the Government, and the sum which is necessary for their existence. So habituated are the people to this system, that they entirely acquiesce in it, and no murmur is ever heard unless the amount extracted from them is extorted with greed and violence. The evils arising from this practice are palpable and familiar. The course of justice is perverted in exchange for bribes. Evils which demand redress are left unheeded, and crimes are daily committed which remain for ever unpunished. But there is an aggravation even to these ills. Innocent people are constantly arrested, imprisoned, and tortured to shield others who are guilty of the offences of which they are charged; prisoners are left untried for years in dungeons of which only those who have lived in the East know the horrors; and charges are invented against persons to vent spite, or gratify revenge. In works of fiction the mandarins are commonly represented as using their power and position as cloaks for oppression and robbery. In one well-known novel the hero meets a friend in dire distress at the loss of his affianced bride, who has been carried off by so exalted an official that he dare not even make a complaint of the wrong done him. Fortunately the hero,

like all heroes in Chinese novels, constitutes himself a redresser of such deeds, and he secures the release of the victim. In quite another part of the country, the same hero is insulted with violence by a number of young *roués;* and when he carries his complaint before the provincial judge, that officer shows such manifest reluctance to take any steps against men to whom the god of wealth had been so liberal, that the hero withdraws his case. On the stage the same mirror is held up to the life of the mandarins, and in one popular Peking farce the ignorance of an officer who has bought his position is amusingly described. On the first occasion of his sitting in judgment, a woman presents a petition which he cannot read. He summons his secretary, who is as illiterate as himself, and recourse is at last had to a poor scholar who earns the support of the magistrate by marrying the petitioner, whom the mandarin does not know how else to dispose of.

The central government is perfectly aware of these evils; but their habit is to move along the line of least resistance, leaving heroic remedies on one side and adopting such palliatives as can be easily put into force. Many of these are excellent in theory, and some are useful in practice. Every office is held for three years only. This naturally prompts the holder of it so to conduct himself in the eyes of his superiors as to ensure his appointment to another post on retirement. At the same time he feels it to be less incumbent on him to cultivate the good will of the inhabitants of the district than if he were to be longer resident among them, and his short tenure of power inclines him to squeeze all he can out of their pockets. A further regu-

lation provides that no mandarin shall serve in his native province, or employ any of his relatives in connection with his post. All these provisos are good in their way; but they avail nothing so long as the rates of pay compel the holders of offices to "squeeze" to live.

According to the received traditions, the people are the most important part of the empire, and the emperor the least. But, like most Chinese theories, this one is only partially carried into practice. Individually the people are treated with a total disregard to their rights, and it is only on those rare occasions when they rise in their thousands that they succeed in gaining a hearing. It cannot be held that any of the evils described are due to the inadequate number of officials; it would, perhaps, be nearer the mark to say that the vastness of the array of officials who crowd every province, aggravates, if it does not originate, many of the iniquities complained of. The necessity of appointing to office those who pass successfully at the public examinations, and the equal necessity of giving places to the liberal contributors to public works, oblige the Government to provide as many posts as possible for the ever-multiplying aspirants. In subordination to the viceroy or governor there are, in each province, a treasurer, a judge, a literary chancellor, and a commissioner. Next in rank to these are the taotais, or intendants of circuit; then follow prefects, and district magistrates. The numbers of these three last orders vary with the size and requirements of each province. Each in turn is responsible for his conduct of public affairs to the officer above him, and thus a sequence of

responsibility runs upwards through every grade to the viceroy, who is directly answerable to the throne.

By the essentially democratic system in vogue in China all these mandarins are taken from the people, and sometimes from the poorest ranks of life. Numbers of incidents occur in history in which wood-cutters, labourers, and hucksters have risen to the highest offices of state. The assumption of official robes at once raises the fortunate commoner to honour and distinction. A wide gulf separates him from his former associates, and so long as he holds office he is an object of respect and fear. But, as in all eastern countries, office in China is precarious. It is always possible that a mandarin may be guilty of such mal-administration, or be afflicted with so itching a palm, that fate in the shape of dismissal may at any moment overtake him, or it may be that malicious charges, got up for the purpose of ousting him from his post, may bring upon him the same unhappy lot. But whatever may be the cause of his misfortune, certain it is that no sooner has it come about than he returns to his original *rôle* in life, carrying with him nothing beyond the shadow of his former glory except, it may be, the store of taxes which he has succeeded in extorting from the people over which his rule was cast. It might be supposed that such a system would produce a levelling influence among mandarins of whatever degree. But this is far from being the case. As a man ascends in the scale of office, he keeps those occupying the ranks through which he has passed at a respectful distance, and there are few district magistrates, all of whom in their legitimate spheres

exercise considerable authority, who would venture to sit down, unless expressly invited to do so, in the presence of a viceroy or a governor.

The civil mandarins, irrespective of the offices which they hold, are divided into nine grades, each of which is distinguished by the colour and nature of the stone or metal button worn on the top of the official cap, by the pattern embroidered on breast and back of the official robes, and by the clasp on the girdle. Those of the first rank wear a ruby or a transparent red stone on the cap, an embroidered Manchurian crane on the breast and back of their robes, and a girdle fastened with a jade clasp set in rubies. A red coral button, an embroidered golden pheasant, and a gold clasp set in rubies, mark the second rank. The third is distinguished by a sapphire button, an embroidered peacock, and a clasp of worked gold. The fourth by a blue opaque stone, an embroidered wild goose, and a clasp of worked gold with a silver button. The fifth by a crystal button, an embroidered silver pheasant, and a clasp of plain gold with a silver button. The sixth by an opaque white shell button, an embroidered eagret, and a mother-of-pearl clasp. The seventh by a plain gold button, an embroidered mandarin duck, and a clasp of silver. The eighth by a worked gold button, an embroidered quail, and a clasp of clear horn. And the ninth by a worked silver button, an embroidered long-tailed jay, and a clasp of buffalo-horn.

Military mandarins are divided into the same number of ranks, and wear the same buttons as those which adorn the caps of the civilians, but in place of the pacific birds which distinguish the

embroideries on the robes worn by these last, wild beasts, as emblematic of the fiercer and more untamed nature of the wearers, form the more appropriate ornaments. Thus military officers of the first grade wear an embroidered unicorn; of the second, a lion; of the third, a leopard; of the fourth, a tiger; of the fifth, a bear; of the sixth, a tiger-cat; of the seventh, a mottled bear; of the eighth, a seal; and of the ninth a rhinoceros. These distinctions are descriptive of the comparative estimate in which military officers are held. Unlike the Aryan races, the Chinese regard the profession of arms with disdain. The same literary knowledge is not required from military officers as is demanded from civilians. A comparatively slight acquaintance with the classics is expected of them, and proficiency in prose and verse composition is not looked for. Skill in archery and riding is justly considered to be of more importance than a profound knowledge of the "Spring and Autumn Annals" of Confucius, or even of the "Book of Changes." But all this tells against them in a nation of pedants like the Chinese, who hold the man who comes out first in the examinations in far higher estimation than the most doughty champion in battle. It sometimes happens that, as was formerly the case in Europe, civilians are in emergencies put to command in the field and on board ships, but such interchanges of duty are only temporary, and are always one-sided. A military man is seldom or never put into civil office.

The central government of the empire is entirely in the hands of civilians. The emperor is,

as has already been said, supreme in all matters of administration, but even the Son of Heaven requires the advice and assistance of trained councillors. The democratic spirit which underlies the whole system of government in China makes it essential that he should be in touch with the people. To supply an intermediate link, two imperial councils advise the emperor on all matters of importance. Both of them are deliberative bodies, and are known as the *Nuiko*, or cabinet, and the *Chünchi Chu*, or the council of state. Subordinate to these bodies are six Boards, with whom rests the active administration of affairs. The cabinet consists of three Chinese and three Manchu chancellors, together with a large body of mandarins of the six highest grades, whose duties, as defined by the imperial statutes, are "to deliberate on the government of the empire, to proclaim abroad the imperial pleasure, and to regulate the canons of state, together with the whole administration of the great balance of power, thus aiding the emperor in directing the affairs of state." Every morning at daylight the chancellors of the cabinet meet and present to the emperor annotated state papers, relating to every branch of administration. With a mark of the vermilion pencil the emperor declares his will, and the papers thus approved are transmitted to the several Boards to be acted upon. To the hands of these authorities also are entrusted the twenty-five seals of government which vouch for the authenticity of the documents to which they are appended, and it further falls to their lot to preside at state ceremonials and sacrificial services of the first order.

The duties of the chancellors of the *Nuiko* are of a negative kind. They originate nothing, but only give their advice on events as they occur. The *Chünchi Chu* may, on the other hand, be called the positive branch of the Government. It determines policies, and initiates courses of action in every department of administration. Its members are appointed directly by the emperor, and consist of princes, nobles, and the highest officers of state, and their duties are described as being "to write imperial edicts and decisions, and to determine such things as are of importance to the army and nation, in order to aid the sovereign in regulating the machinery of affairs." No limitation of number is fixed to these officials; but, as a matter of fact, they have not of late years exceeded four, that number being held to be the best suited for the despatch of business; the necessity of having an equal number of Chinese and Manchus making an even number imperative. At an hour in the morning when the capitals of Europe are wrapped in slumber the members of the *Chünchi Chu* meet in the Forbidden Palace and discuss, in the presence of the Son of Heaven, all affairs of state, from the most important imperial concerns down to the promotion and degradation of mandarins of the lowest ranks. When a matter of ordinary administration is decided the minute embodying the decision is forwarded to the *Nuiko* for promulgation, while orders demanding secrecy are entrusted to the Board of War for execution. We may well imagine that it was through this channel that the secret decree, counteracting the latest edict commanding the due fulfilment of the treaties, was transmitted to the provincial viceroys.

The minutes of this council are carefully preserved, and form a complete administrative history of the empire. It is from the archives of this office that the *Peking Gazette* is compiled. This journal, which is one of the oldest in the world, contains a selection of the imperial edicts, the memorials, and the official announcements issued daily from the *Chünchi Chu*. Special copies are despatched to the high provincial authorities by imperial couriers, and printed copies are supplied to subscribers by more leisurely means. There is no government in the world which in this respect lives so *coram populo* as the Chinese. The faults and errors of every one bearing office in the empire, from the emperor down to the lowest district magistrate, are duly pointed out in the pages of this outspoken journal. In its columns the emperor, in times of national disaster, does penance, as it were, for his shortcomings, which have, as he and his people choose to consider, brought the misfortunes on the land. There, also, may be read the imperial condemnation of princes of the blood, as well as of officials of all ranks, who have acted in defiance of the laws or neglected the minutest ceremonies. And side by side with these appear memorials on all subjects interesting to the people, whether it be the canonization of saints, the conferring posthumous honours on deceased heroes, or the virtues and crimes of individuals. Its pages thus reflect the national mind on all matters great and small; and hold up to us a picture, true to life, of the manners and modes of thought of the people.

In so vast an empire as China it is plainly impossible that such councils as have just been

described can do more than direct the imperial policy. The executive must be left to other hands. It would be even more impossible for the *Nuiko* and *Chünchi Chu* to carry out administrative details in the provinces than it would be for the Queen's Cabinet to deal successfully with the minutiæ of foreign affairs or of colonial concerns, and, therefore, as among ourselves, departmental matters are handed over to the public offices for execution. The principal of these are known as the six Boards, which are those of (1) civil office, of (2) revenue, of (3) rites, of (4) war, of (5) punishments, and of (6) works. The first of these concerns itself with titles, patents, precedence, etc., and its duties are described as including "whatever appertains to the plans of selecting rank and official gradation, to the rules determining degradation and promotion, to the ordinances of granting investitures and rewards, and the laws for fixing schedules and furloughs, that there may be a full and constant supply of officials." One of the most troublesome duties connected with this office is that of providing for the emergencies which constantly arise from the death of one or other of the parents of officials. On such occasions the law makes it imperative that the bereaved mandarin should retire from public life for three years, a period which, by a pious fiction, is reduced in practice to twenty-seven months. Even this shorter time, however, often proves to be highly inconvenient. A viceroy may be in the midst of a delicate negotiation, or a governor may be face to face with a rebellion in his province, but on the news reaching him of the death of either parent he is bound by all he holds sacred to lock up his seal

of office and to retire into private life, there, theoretically, to mourn for the loss which has overtaken him. In moments of supreme peril, however, the emperor uses his prerogative, which overrides aught else, and orders the officer to postpone his mourning to a more convenient season. This was done in the case of the viceroy Li Hungchang, whose mother died during the war with France, and whose funeral even was unattended by her renowned son.

The Board of Revenue "directs the territorial government of the empire, and keeps the lists of populations in order to aid the emperor in nourishing all people; whatever pertains to the regulations for levying and collecting duties and taxes, to the plans of distributing salaries and allowances, to the rates for receipts and disbursements at the treasuries, and to the rights of transporting by land and water, is reported to this Board, that sufficient supplies for the country should be provided." These duties are multifarious enough, and if they were performed in the spirit in which such duties are carried out among ourselves, they would abundantly overtax the resources of the department. But exactness in statistics is foreign to all Oriental nations. Round figures and general statements are all that the Board aims at, and as there is no Giffen to check the returns sent in, the subordinates find it easy to satisfy the demands of their superiors. The census returns are instances of the unreliability of Chinese statistics. In 1711 the population was returned as being 28,605,716; in 1792 Lord Macartney was officially informed that it was 333,000,000, and according to

census of 1812 it was put down at 362,447,183. So that while in eighty-one years it is described as having multiplied twelvefold, in the following twenty years it increased only by 29,447,183. These results are partly intelligible when the system by which the returns are made up is explained. Each householder is supposed to hang on the door of his house the number of persons residing within, and in case he neglects to do so the returning officer is reduced to guessing at the number the house is likely to contain.

But China is one of the most difficult countries in the world in which to arrive at an even approximately accurate idea of the extent of the population. Wars, rebellions, pestilence, and floods, annually sweep off the people by millions, and calculations based on anything like a regular increase are plainly impossible. In the famine which overtook the northern provinces about twenty years ago, nine million people are said to have perished, and during the T'aip'ing rebellion whole provinces were depopulated. Cholera, again, is more or less recurrent every year, and attacks the natives with a virulence which is happily unknown in western lands. The returns, therefore, to be exact, should be prepared with the utmost care and precision, and these qualities are entirely wanting on the part of the computers.

It would be interesting to know by what method the Board arrives at the figures in the returns, setting forth the number of Manchu young ladies of a fitting age and position to be introduced into the imperial harem. As, in this case, the honour is rather avoided than courted, it is probable that

the numbers returned are as much under the mark as the census figures are inflated above it.

The mints also come within the scope of the Board of Revenue, and are managed in the slipshod manner in which all economic science is treated in China. The copper used is brought from the province of Yun-nan, and is paid for at rates which provoke a constant correspondence between the provincial authorities and the Board. When purchased it is distributed between twenty-nine mints, which are scattered all over the empire, and which are bound to send annually to Peking supplies of money for the use of the capital. This decentralization, which permeates the whole administrative system of the Chinese, is productive of many evils and inconveniences; but, as in so many other administrative gaucheries, so large a number of officials and others are interested in the maintenance of this one, that it practically defies reform.

The Board of Rites "examines and directs concerning the performance of the five kinds of ritual observances, and makes proclamation thereof to the whole empire, thus aiding the emperor in guiding all people. Whatever appertains to the ordinances for regulating precedence and literary distinctions, to the canons for maintaining religious honour and fidelity, to the orders respecting intercourse and tribute, and to the forms of giving banquets and granting bounties, is reported to this Board in order to promote national education." As has been said, ceremony makes up the life of the Chinese people, it surrounds every act of their daily conduct, and is the guide which directs with unsurpassable minuteness the behaviour of man to man, and

the attentions due between all ranks and conditions. To this Board therefore belongs the duty of determining the number of bows and the acts of courtesy which men of the various grades should pay to their superiors, equals, and inferiors. It determines also the terms appropriate for official correspondence and the forms which should be addressed to envoys from foreign states. It prescribes the ceremonies proper to imperial receptions, and lays down sumptuary laws for the regulation of official robes and habiliments. It orders the rites to be performed at all religious services, and on the occasion of an eclipse of the sun or moon, indicates the special forms which the observance should take to preserve those luminaries from the attack of the dragons which are believed to be about to devour them. Its ministrations thus enter into every act of the life of the people, and supply all ranks with the knowledge necessary to enable each man to play with assurance his social part in that state of life to which it has pleased Fate to call him. As a handmaid to ceremonies, music comes within the cognizance of this Board, which is charged with the duty of circulating throughout the provinces those airs of antiquity which have, in popular estimation, contributed so much to the formation of the national character.

To the Board of War is entrusted "the duty of aiding the sovereign to protect the people, by the direction of all military affairs, in the metropolis and the provinces, and to regulate the affairs of the State in accordance with the reports received from the various departments regarding deprivation of, or appointment to, office; succession to, or creation

of, hereditary military rank; postal or courier arrangements; examination and selection of deserving official candidates, and the accuracy of returns." This description rather exaggerates the duties belonging to this office. It implies that, as with our own War Office, all military affairs throughout the empire are directed by it. Its duties in this direction are lightened by the fact that the household troops and bannermen are withdrawn from its superintendence, and that the provincial forces are raised, paid, and administered by the provincial authorities. The postal system, which in western lands is so important a department, is in China confined, so far as official life is concerned, to providing for the conveyance of despatches. In an interesting report on the general system of carrying letters, the British Consul at Foochow writes (1892):—"The Chinese have not yet established any Government post-offices or postal system for the masses of the people, though private enterprise has for many years rendered communication easy between the people of all parts of the empire. This is conducted through what are called 'letter shops.' No stamps are used, but the 'chop' [seal] of the keeper of the shop is always placed upon the envelope. Imperial edicts and other official despatches are carried from city to city and province to province by couriers, who are, for this country, very expeditious, being in some parts provided with horses at convenient relay stations. Despatches are thus conveyed in cases of emergency two hundred or two hundred and fifty miles a day. In districts where horses are used, each station-master is required to keep on

hand from ten to twenty horses or donkeys, and the local official is held responsible for all delays that occur. These official couriers are not allowed to convey private despatches or letters.

"At the treaty ports 'letter shops' are used by the natives only; but in the interior, or places not reached by the foreign postal arrangements, they are employed by foreigners as well, though chiefly by missionaries. These speak well of the system for its security, but do not consider it all that could be desired as respects quickness of delivery. It somewhat resembles our express business, as it transmits parcels of moderate size and weight. It is said to possess two decided advantages over our western system—insurance against loss and monthly settlement of accounts. All letters and parcels to be sent may be registered and insured. When given in at a 'letter shop' the contents of an envelope are displayed before it is sealed up and stamped with the 'chop' of the shop. Charges for transmission of valuables are made on a percentage of declared value, and, as is the case with letters, differ according to the distance. A receipt is given, and the shopkeeper then becomes responsible either for its safe delivery with unbroken 'chop,' at its destination, or for its return to the sender. Owing to the competition that exists in all large cities and thickly populated districts, this is necessary if the shopkeeper hopes to keep his patronage. In some parts of the empire about two-thirds of the expense of transmission is paid by the sender, the remainder being collected from the receiver; thus the shop is secured against entire loss from transient customers, and the sender has some guarantee that his letter will be conveyed with despatch.

"The other feature much appreciated by native merchants is that of keeping an open account with the shop. Charges for service rendered are entered against regular customers, and settlements are made monthly. In case of loss it is seldom necessary to call in the aid of the Courts, the force of competition being sufficient to ensure reasonable settlement.

"There are said to be nearly two hundred letter shops in Shanghai, though in many remote villages there are none. For short distances, and in all the central and southern parts of China, the messengers travel on foot at a rapid pace. This service would be liable to highway robbery, but that in this country they have a way of compounding such villainy. The robber bands of each district collect blackmail, and for the sums paid them regularly they not only do not molest the messengers themselves, but even agree to keep others from doing so. The Taotai Shêng, at Chefoo, at the last winter session of the Polytechnic, offered prizes for the four best essays on 'How to Establish a Chinese Imperial Post Office.' There were some fifty competitors, and the prizes were duly delivered. Some of the essayists proposed the enlargement of the courier system, others the use of the offices and employés of the telegraph companies where they exist, and still others plans, closely modelled upon western systems.

"There are two kinds of stamps known among dealers as Chinese stamps. The first of these was introduced by Sir Robert Hart, and is used only in the Customs Service. The other is a local Shanghai stamp used by a company carrying letters about the city of Shanghai, and to outposts where there

are foreign consuls, chiefly on the Yangtsze river, to the ports of Ningpo and Fuchow in the south, and Chefoo, Tientsin, and Peking in the north. These two systems are entirely in the hands of foreigners. Letters, etc., of foreigners are conveyed from China to other nations by the postal systems of the several countries, all consuls being regarded as postmasters for their own countries. Letters may be sent to and from China by the use of the stamps of any country through their respective consuls . . . at the treaty ports. Foreigners living in the interior or away from treaty ports must make private arrangements for getting their mail matter from their nearest consul."

In the near future it is probable that a complete postal system throughout the empire will be established under the guidance and management of the foreign customs service. Even this, however, does not exhaust the curtailment of the duties of the Board under the influence of reform. As in England in the seventeenth century, so now in China, the military and naval forces are intimately united. The system of sending soldiers to sea, and of entrusting the command of armies to men who had spent their lives afloat, which existed under the Stuarts, still holds sway to a mitigated extent in the Flowery Land. It is true that the Board is the official headquarters of the navy; but, like the provincial armies, the provincial fleets are entirely under the control of the local authorities. A change, however, is coming over this time-honoured system, and the establishment of an Admiralty at Peking threatens at the same time the pretensions of this Board and the sway of the provincial officials.

But if the Board of War has little to do, the Board of Punishments always has its hands full. "It has the government and direction of punishments throughout the empire, for the purpose of aiding the sovereign in correcting all people. Whatever appertains to measures for applying the laws with leniency or severity, to the task of hearing evidence and giving decisions, to the rights of granting pardons, reprieves, or otherwise, and to the rates of fines and interest, are all reported to this Board, to aid in giving dignity to national manners." China is a land of professions; and if the laws affecting this Board were carried out in the spirit, as well as in the letter, it might fulfil a beneficent function. Its utterances breathe nothing but legality and mercy. Its acts are characterized by injustice and cruelty. To a committee consisting of presidents of this Board and metropolitan censors is entrusted the duty of revising the decisions of the provincial judges, more especially in cases of death sentences. On rare occasions it may be that this court of appeal reverses unjust decisions; but the *Peking Gazette* reveals another side to the picture, and shows that more often than not gross iniquities are perpetrated under its direction. To it the people look with horror rather than with confidence, and the prison within its doors is regarded as a place into which Hope never enters. Regardless of the criminal code, which has been extolled, and rightly extolled, by European writers as being exceptionally just and humane, the most cruel and inhuman tortures are there, as elsewhere, inflicted on criminals to force confession from them. It was in this prison that Sir H. Parkes and Sir H.

Loch were confined when they were taken prisoners in 1860. The horrors of the place may be imagined from the following passage taken from Sir H. Loch's "Narrative of Events in China":—

"The discipline of the prison was not in itself very strict; and had it not been for the starvation, the pain arising from the cramped position in which the chains and ropes retained the arms and legs, with the heavy drag of the iron collar on the bones of the spine, and the creeping vermin that infested every place, together with the occasional beatings and tortures which the prisoners were from time to time taken away for a few hours to endure—returning with bleeding legs and bodies, and so weak as to be scarce able to crawl—there was no very great hardship to be endured. . . . There is a small maggot which appears to infest all Chinese prisons; the earth at the depth of a few inches swarms with them; they are the scourge most dreaded by every poor prisoner. Few enter a Chinese prison who have not on their bodies or limbs some wounds, either inflicted by blows to which they have been subjected, or caused by the manner in which they have been bound; the instinct of the insect to which I allude appears to lead him direct to these wounds. Bound and helpless, the poor wretch cannot save himself from their approach, although he knows full well that if they once succeed in reaching his lacerated skin, there is the certainty of a fearful, lingering, and agonizing death before him."

It is not often that native critics agree with foreigner writers in their estimates of Chinese institutions; but as regards the Board of Punishments

there is no room for two opinions. Not long since a censor presented a memorial to the throne, in which he complained that "the number of prisoners detained in the Board of Punishments was excessive," and asked that "as an act of compassion to the sufferers, instructions should be issued for the immediate investigation of all outstanding cases. Prisoners," he went on to say, "were sent to the Board from all the detective departments in the capital, and the maltreatment and exactions which they endure at the hands of the warders are heart-rending in the extreme. . . . Persons convicted of slight offences, for which banishment and bambooing would be sufficient punishment, often languish for a long time in prison, and are either ruined entirely, or are starved to death in large numbers every year. At the present moment over two hundred and fifty prisoners are in the Board's prison awaiting trial. . . . In summer the filth and pestilential air of the place breed disease, while in winter the inmates are pierced to the very bone with wind and cold. This may be suitable enough treatment," he goes on to say, with Oriental humanity, "for criminals condemned to death, but it certainly should elicit sympathy when applied to persons convicted of minor offences." *

By the light of such descriptions the existence of an iron door in the rear wall of the prison, through which the dead bodies of prisoners are thrust out to be carried away for burial, is fully accounted for.

The Board of Works "has the government and direction of the public works throughout the empire,

* *Translation of Peking Gazette*, September 24, 1888.

together with the current expenses of the same, for the purpose of aiding the emperor to keep all the people in a state of repose. Whatever appertains to plans for buildings of wood or earth, to the forms of useful instruments, to the laws for stopping up or opening channels, and to the ordinances for constructing the mausolea and temples, is reported to this Board in order to perfect national works." How the officers of this Board perform the duties entrusted to them is made plain and palpable to every traveller throughout the country. The Yellow river is a standing instance of the incompetency and dishonesty of these officials. A mighty stream which, if properly engineered, might be made a busy highway for the transport of merchandise across the breadth of the empire, has been allowed to become impassable for traffic, and a constant source of alarm and danger to the districts bordering on its banks. The Grand Canal, again, whose surface in the Middle Ages was crowded with richly freighted barques carrying to the northern provinces the costly wares of the central districts, and bearing back to those busy centres of industry the ruder products of the colder climes, is now barely navigable by small boats even in those parts where water is still to be found, and through a large portion of its course the bed lies dry. The paved highways of the empire, which excited the admiration of early European travellers in China, are now in such a condition of disrepair, so full of holes and ruts, that they are deserted for the tracks by the sides which, though quagmires in wet weather, and inches deep in dust in dry seasons, are still held to be preferable to the roads which used justly to be esteemed as

noteworthy among the marvels of China. So it is with all the public works entrusted to this Board. Nothing is kept in sound repair. When a dike gives way it is patched up, when a bridge threatens to fall down it is shored up, and monuments which can no longer stand as first erected are allowed to lie full length on the ground. The supply of military stores, the furnishing of pottery and glass-ware for the court, the regulation of weights and measures and other commissariat duties, which are also entrusted to this Board, all share in the same neglect and dishonesty which characterize the engineering departments.

Next to the six Boards the most important department at the present time is unquestionably the Tsungli Yamun, or foreign office. Before the war of 1860, such a department did not exist. With the lofty contempt with which the Chinese affect to regard foreigners, it was considered that the Colonial office, which superintends the affairs of Mongolia and Tibet, was quite competent to deal with any matter which might arise with the "outer barbarians." But the establishment of European ministers at Peking changed all this. It was recognized that it was imperatively necessary that officials should be especially appointed to hold communication with the intrusive foreigners, and by a decree issued on the 19th of January, 1861, the new department was formed, and was ordered to consist of Prince Kung (the brother of the then reigning emperor), Kwei Liang, a senior grand-secretary, and Wên Siang, a vice-president of the Board of War. Successive changes have raised the number of these officials from three to

eleven, at which figure they now stand. For the most part the officials of this department have acted as might have been expected of them. After the capture of Peking, and when the allied troops were still in the neighbourhood of the capital, they trimmed their sails to the prevailing breeze, and yielded all that was asked of them. So soon, however, as the impending danger was removed, and compliance was therefore no longer necessary, they relapsed into the time-honoured attitude of haughty contempt towards foreigners. On repeated occasions they contrived to offer slights and impertinences to the foreign envoys, and if the records of the Yamun were published they would contain accounts of strange scenes which have been enacted within its walls. We should read of fierce discussions, of angry sneers, of egregious loss of temper, and, on one occasion, of the Chinese mandarins stamping up and down the room, uttering cries and launching abuse, like a party of angry women. For the most part, however, they have found excuses and evasions to answer their purposes better than any other weapons, and by means of these they have succeeded in minimizing the privileges granted under the treaties, of withdrawing concessions which have been solemnly granted, and of avoiding the just consequences arising out of the outrages and murders committed on travellers and missionaries. By skilfully playing off the foreign ministers one against the other they have been able to prevent the adoption of any consistently united action, while the baits they have dangled in sight of several of these much-enduring representatives have inclined

them to yield on points which are dear in the sight of Chinamen. The Yamun seems, however, to be unaware that this is policy which can be carried beyond the limits of prudence, and it cannot be doubted that, unless it changes its line of action, it will before long find that, as in 1842, and as in 1860, so again, the empire will be involved in a war with one or more of those powers which it is now fast driving to the "sticking point."

The Colonial office "has the government and direction of external foreigners, orders their emoluments and honours, appoints their visits to court, and regulates their punishments, in order to display the majesty and goodness of the state." Since the withdrawal from this office of the management of the relations with Russia (1860), its duties have been confined to the control of the various Mongolian tribes, and of the natives of Tibet. As in all other departments of the government, the mandarins employed under this office are obliged to supplement their legitimate salaries by illegal exactions. It is not often that a foreigner has an opportunity of observing the system by which these employés fill their pockets, but Mr. Rockhill, on his recent journey into Tibet, was able to read, mark, and learn the practices of these gentry. On the frontiers of Mongolia he found a class of officials who received from their paternal government an annual income of twenty-five taels, a sum equivalent to about four pounds sterling. Such a sum is of course known and recognized as insufficient to keep body and soul together. The Office therefore winks at a system by which the frontier officials "eat the people," as the sufferers describe the process.

They are entitled to levy horses, carts, and camels for the journeys which it is necessary for them to undertake in the performance of their duties. By demanding more of these than they require, and by accepting money equivalents for the superfluous animals, they net considerable sums. But this is not their only method of gathering supplies. Every Chinaman crossing the frontier has to take out a passport which is only good for forty days. For such a passport he pays two taels; and if, as is commonly the case, he overstays his time he is called upon to pay a fine, the amount of which depends mainly on the will and pleasure of the mandarin who issued the passport. With such practices in vogue friction constantly arises, and one of the most difficult duties incumbent on the office is that of "eating" the Mongolians and at the same time keeping the Khans loyal. Liberal bestowal of honours which cost nothing and the dispensing of imperial hospitality when the Mongol chiefs visit Peking do much to keep the vain and ignorant princes in good humour.

Another important bureau is the office of censors, which has entrusted to it the "care of manners and customs, the investigation of all public offices within and without the capital, the discrimination between the good and bad performance of the business transacted in them, and between the depravity and uprightness of the officers employed; the duty of urging its members to utter each his sentiments and reproofs, in order to cause officers to be diligent in attention to their daily duties, and to render the government of the empire stable." This is one of the strangest institutions in the

government, and illustrates the anomalous contradictions which meet one at every turn in China. Every one is fully aware that if these duties were rigorously carried out, there is scarcely a mandarin in the empire who would not be impeached, and righteously so, and yet censors are gravely appointed and charged to do that which if they were to attempt would place nine out of every ten officers on their trial. That "you cannot indict a whole nation," is a truth which is recognized by the censors, and they, therefore, devote their attention to denouncing flagrant cases of official iniquity and sometimes, as the *Peking Gazette* tells us, to making frivolous and fussy charges. Fifty-six of these guardians of public morality, who on occasions justify their *raison d'être* by exposing wrongs committed within their cognizance, are distributed throughout the provinces. No mandarin, however exalted, is exempt from their attacks, not even the Son of Heaven, who, as has been said, is "thus in the presence of a chronic day of judgment, to which he is himself amenable, albeit he is the sole judge of every case." Although it is notorious that the censors leave unnoticed a host of crimes which cry to Heaven for redress, it cannot be denied that they sometimes use the weapon placed in their hands with energy and effect. When it does not clash with their interests they expose the injustice, cruelty, and vice of officials of every rank; and though they cannot be regarded as a real safeguard against wrong, it may fairly be said of them that they help to mitigate existing evils. Occasionally, as though there were not always a rich crop of iniquities which

they might help to weed out, they appear to take a delight in exaggerating causes of complaint, and even in inventing indictments against those occupying high places. If by chance some unwary courtier, worn out by unduly long mourning for the decease of an imperial personage, should venture on improvising theatricals or any other mild form of amusement, a censor is sure to rise up and impeach him before their imperial master, on the charge of impropriety and want of respect; if the country is afflicted with a plague of locusts, or is suffering from drought, some sanctimonious censor is certain to take up his parable and to attribute the misfortunes to a departure from the paths of virtue by the Son of Heaven; and to call upon him "to pay a more earnest regard to morality, and to aim at an effectual discharge of his duty;" or, if a viceroy fails to visit the city temple on the emperor's day he is liable to be held up to obloquy as one who disregards rites and ceremonies. At times they overstep the mark in their officious zeal, and receive severe verbal castigation from their imperial master.

Not long since one of this class memorialized the throne, urging that Prince Ch'un, the emperor's father, should be relieved from his official appointments, and that the deceased empress consort should have a posthumous distinction conferred upon her. This was before the young emperor had taken over the reins of government, and it fell therefore to the dowager empresses to remark upon the proposals, and this they proceeded to do in good set terms. They declared that "the censor had grossly misinterpreted the motives which

actuated the Government. His memorial," they continued, "had filled them with astonishment. As regards the late empress consort, a title of honour has been conferred on her, and there can, therefore, be no question of a change which is totally uncalled for. That the censor should have given reins to his imagination, and should have unwarrantably addressed the throne, was in itself an act of folly; but that he should still further have had the boldness to introduce statements without foundation, derived from rumour alone, was yet more gravely reprehensible. Let him," added the imperial ladies, "be handed over to the Board for the decision of a severe penalty." *

Other causes besides flouting imperial personages sometimes work woe to the censors, and a curious illustration of the ill-will with which foreigners are regarded by the government is furnished by a decree degrading a certain censor named Ch'ung Hsiin. After enumerating one or two charges against him, the decree goes on to say, "It is also true that he wrote the signboards of the Yungshun Ch'ien foreign goods shop outside the Chêngyeng gate (of Peking), and that he went in person to offer his congratulations when the shop was opened." So here we have it stated that it is a crime for an official to help or associate with foreigners. It is sidelights such as these which enable us to understand the real feeling which actuates the mandarins in their conduct towards us.†

* *Translation of Peking Gazette*, June 17, 1876.

† *Ibid.*, Jan. 25, 1883.

CHAPTER III.

THE PENAL CODE.

It has often been said that the laws of a nation furnish the best and truest description of the manners and customs of the people. In all respects the Chinese code is an exceptionally good instance of the truth of this maxim. Unlike many of the legal systems of the east and west, it avoids all useless redundancies, and represents, in a concise form, the laws which are intended to govern the courts of justice. Further, following the bent of the national mind, it does not concern itself only with the duties of men as citizens, but follows them into their homes and provides legislation for their social conduct, their relations in the family, and even for the clothes which they should wear. Regarded as a whole it is obvious that its provisions are mainly directed to keeping the people quiet and loyal. The emperor is surrounded with enactments which are intended to ensure that such divinity shall hedge him in "that treason can but peep to what it would," and every disturbing motive and exciting cause is studiously suppressed among his subjects.

The code begins by enumerating the punishments to be inflicted for offences, and defines them

as (1), flogging with a straight, polished piece of bamboo, the branches cut away, and reduced to five Chinese feet five inches in length, varying in breadth from one to two inches, and in weight from one and a half to two Chinese pounds, and when used to be held by the smaller end; (2) the canque, consisting of "a square frame of dry wood, three feet long, two feet nine inches broad, and weighing in ordinary cases twenty-five pounds," which is carried on the shoulders; (3) the capital punishment, which is inflicted either by strangulation or by the executioner's sword. Most punishments for the less serious crimes are redeemable by fines, and even capital sentences, in such cases as are not legally excluded from the benefits of general acts of grace and pardon, are commutable for sums of money varying in amount with the heinousness of the crime and with the wealth of the criminal. A man sentenced to a hundred blows with the bamboo can save his skin by the payment of five ounces of silver, and an officer above the fourth rank who is sentenced to be strangled may avoid the cord by paying twelve thousand ounces into the coffers of the state. But besides these pecuniary modifications, there are certain conditions which are held to justify the mitigation of sentences. In the case of an offender surrendering himself to justice, he shall, in some circumstances, be entitled to a reduction of two degrees of punishment, and in others he absolves himself from all consequences by giving himself up. If, again, "an offender under sentence of death for an offence not excluded from the contingent benefit of an act of grace, shall have parents or grandparents who are sick, infirm, or aged above

seventy years, and who have no other son or grandson above the age of sixteen to support them, . . . this circumstance shall be submitted to the consideration of His Imperial Majesty." In any case offenders under fifteen years of age, or over seventy, are allowed to redeem themselves from any punishment less than capital. Even when the crime is capital, if the offender is less than ten or more than eighty, his case, unless he be charged with treason, is to be recommended to the consideration of the emperor; and no punishment, except for treason and rebellion, shall be visited on those who are less than seven or more than ninety.

Especial regulations lighten punishments to be inflicted on four classes of the population. Astronomers sentenced to banishment may submit to one hundred blows with the bamboo instead, and redeem themselves from further punishment, unless they have been guilty of "poisoning, murdering, wounding, robbing, stealing, killing by magic, or of any such offences as may subject the party to the punishment of being branded." Artificers and musicians who have incurred sentences of banishment may be flogged, and, instead of being sent to Central Asia, may be kept in the magistrate's yamun and employed in the service of government; while women who are sentenced to banishment can always redeem themselves by paying a fine. In cases where women are convicted of offences punishable by flogging, it is provided that they shall be allowed to wear their upper garment unless the crime should be adultery, when that privilege is withdrawn.

Such are some of the main provisions which condition the laws laid down in the code. These

apply with strange minuteness to all sorts and conditions of men, from the emperor in his palace down to actors who are regarded as the meanest of his subjects. In every kingdom and empire the life and repose of the sovereign is jealously guarded by all the precautions which the law can provide, and in eastern countries, where the dagger and poison are the constant terror of potentates, the preventive measures are always carefully devised. No doubt many of the observances practised at the Chinese court, such, for instance, as standing with the hands joined as in supplication, and kneeling when addressing the sovereign, were instituted as safeguards from harboured weapons or from violence. In the code, pains and penalties of every intensity are laid down as the portion of those who directly or indirectly raise any suspicion of evil design against the throne.

Any one passing without proper authorization through any of the gates of the Forbidden City incurs a hundred blows of the bamboo. This law is invariably enforced, and quite lately the *Peking Gazette* announced the infliction of the penalty on a trespasser, and the degradation of the officer of the guard at the gate through which he had entered. Death by strangulation is the punishment due to any stranger found in any of the emperor's apartments; and with that curious introspection which Chinese laws profess, any one passing the palace gate with the intention of going in, although he does not do so, is to have a definite number of blows with the bamboo. Every workman engaged within the palace has a pass given to him, on which is a detailed description of

his figure and appearance, and which he is bound to give up to the officer of the identical gate through which he was admitted. To carry drugs or weapons into the Forbidden City is to court a flogging in addition to perpetual banishment, and any one "who shall shoot arrows or bullets, or fling bricks or stones towards the imperial temple, or towards any imperial palace . . . shall suffer death by being strangled at the usual period."

No convicted person or relative of a convicted person is to be employed about the imperial city, and any one found disputing or quarrelling within the precincts of the palace is to be punished with fifty blows. If the quarrelling leads to a personal encounter the penalty is doubled. Even the roads along which the emperor travels and the bridges which he crosses are not to be profaned by vulgar use, and any one intruding thereon while the emperor's retinue is passing is to be strangled. If the emperor arrives unexpectedly at a place "it shall be sufficient for those who are unable to retire in time, to prostrate themselves humbly on the roadside."

But there are other and more insidious dangers than these to be guarded against. Doctors and cooks have it readily within their power to do all the evil that the dagger or club can accomplish, and it is therefore enacted that if a physician inadvertently mixes medicines for the emperor in any manner that is not sanctioned by established practice, or if a cook unwittingly introduces any prohibited ingredients into the dishes prepared for his imperial master, they shall each receive a hundred blows. The same punishment is due to

the cook if he puts any unusual drug into an article of food, and, in addition, he is compelled to swallow the compound.

Marriage is regarded as an incentive to political peace and quiet. It is considered, and rightly considered, that a householder is less likely to disturb the peace of the realm than a waif and stray, and the Government therefore considers marriage a subject worthy of careful legislation. In Chinese parlance the State is the father and mother of the people, and it is part of its office to see that parents do not neglect their duty in this respect towards their offspring. When a marriage contract is in contemplation it shall be made plain to both of the families interested that neither the bride nor bridegroom are "diseased, infirm, aged, or under age." If, no objection having been raised on any of these scores, the preliminary contract be made and the lady afterwards wish to decline to execute it, the person who had authority to give her away shall receive fifty blows, and the marriage shall be at once completed. If a son, when at a distance from his family, enters into a marriage contract in ignorance of an engagement which his father may have made on his behalf at home, he shall give up his own choice and shall fulfil the contract made for him by his parent. Bigamy is punished with ninety blows, and the same fate awaits any man who, during the lifetime of his wife, raises a concubine to the rank which she enjoys. The times and seasons proper for marriages are, in western lands, left to individual taste and judgment; but in China, where etiquette is a matter of State policy, it is necessary to lay down rules for the

guidance of the people in such matters. The same authority which makes it incumbent on a son on the death of his father or mother to go unshaved for a hundred days, and if he is in office to retire into private life for twenty-seven months, forbids him to marry while in mourning for a parent, under a penalty of a hundred blows for disobedience. The same punishment is to be inflicted on any misguided widow who embraces a second husband before her weeds should be legally dispensed with; while the frisky widow, who, having been ennobled by the emperor during the lifetime of her first husband, should dare to marry again, is ordered to be bambooed, to lose her rank, and to be separated from her second venture.

Marriage is strictly forbidden within certain recognized degrees of relationship, and even persons of the same surname who intermarry are liable to separation, and to forfeit the wedding presents to Government. Indeed, the matrimonial prohibitions are both numerous and far-reaching. A man may not marry an absconded female criminal—a law, one would imagine, which it cannot often be necessary to enforce. A mandarin may not marry the daughter of any one living under his rule, nor may he make either a female musician or comedian his wife. A priest of Buddha or of Tao may not marry at all. A slave may not marry a free woman, and so on. But though the State in its wisdom is a great promoter of marriage, it affords many loopholes for escape to people who find that they have made mistakes. Of course the law of divorce only applies to the wife, and apart from the supreme crime of wives, the following seven

causes are held to justify the annulling of the marriage; viz. barrenness, lasciviousness, disregard of her husband's parents, talkativeness, thievish propensities, envious and suspicious temper, and inveterate infirmity. It must be admitted that this list offers many chances of escape to a restless husband, and the further enactment that when "a husband and wife do not agree, and both parties are desirous of separation, the law limiting the right of divorce shall not be enforced to prevent it," leaves nothing to be desired.

Of all offences treason is, in the opinion of Chinese legislators, the gravest and most worthy of severe and condign punishment. So atrocious is it that capital punishment as laid down in the general provisions is considered an insufficient requital, and the equivalent of the old English sentence, "To be hung, drawn, and quartered," is met with in China in the shape of an even more cruel sentence, viz. *lingchi*, or death by a slow and lingering process. A culprit, condemned to this form of death, is tied to a cross, and, while he is yet alive, gashes are made by the executioner on the fleshy parts of his body, varying in number according to the disposition of the judge. When this part of the sentence has been carried out, a merciful blow severs the head from the body. It is a principle of Chinese jurisprudence that in great crimes all the male relatives of the principal are held to be participators in his offence. Thus, for one man's sin, whole families are cut off, and in cases of treason "all the male relatives of the first degree, at or above the age of sixteen, of persons convicted—namely, the father, grandfather, sons,

grandsons, paternal uncles and their sons respectively—shall, without any regard to the place of residence, or to the natural or acquired infirmities of particular individuals, be indiscriminately beheaded." But this is not all. Every male relative, of whatever degree, who may be dwelling under the roof of the offender, is doomed to death. An exception is made in the case of young boys, who are allowed their lives, but on the condition that they are made eunuchs for service in the imperial palace. In the appendix to Stanton's translation of the code an imperial edict is quoted from the *Peking Gazette* in which a case is detailed of a supposed treasonable attempt on the life of the Emperor Kiak'ing (1796–1820). As the imperial *cortège* was entering one of the gates of the palace a man pushed through the crowd, with, as it was considered, the intention of murdering the emperor. He was promptly seized by the guards and put on his trial, when he made, or is said to have made, a confession of his guilt. In grandiloquent terms the emperor proclaimed the event to the empire, and ended by confirming the sentence of *lingchi* on the offender, and by condemning his sons, "being of tender age, to be strangled."

Lingchi is the invariable fate pronounced on any one who kills three people in a household, or on a son who murders his father or mother. Some of the most horrible passages in the *Peking Gazette* are those which announce the infliction of this awful punishment on madmen and idiots who, in sudden outbreaks of mania, have committed parricide. For this offence no infirmity is accepted, even as a palliation. The addition of this form of execution

to those generally prescribed is an instance of the latitude which is taken by the powers that be in the interpretation of the code. To read the list of authorized punishments one would imagine that the Chinese were the mildest mannered men who ever had culprits before them. Admitting that torture is necessary in China to extract confessions from obdurate witnesses, the kinds authorized are probably as unobjectionable as could well be devised. But they are but a shadow of the pain and penalties actually inflicted every day in all parts of the empire. Even in the appendix to this code it was found advisable to add the imperial sanction to more stringent measures in cases of robbery or homicide. Instruments for crushing the ankles, and for compressing the fingers, are there admitted on the canonical list. The first of these, it is laid down, shall consist of "a middle piece of wood, three (Chinese) feet four inches long, and two side pieces three feet each in length. The upper end of each piece shall be circular and rather more than one inch in diameter, the lower end shall be cut square and two inches in thickness. At a distance of six inches from the lower ends, four hollows or sockets shall be excavated—one on each side of the middle piece and one in each of the other pieces to correspond. The lower ends being fixed and immovable, and the ankles of the criminal under examination being lodged within the sockets, a painful compression is effected by forcibly drawing together the upper ends." The finger squeezers are necessarily smaller, but are arranged on much the same principle.

But even these tortures are considered insuf-

ficient to meet the requirements of the courts of justice. Mandarins, whose minds have grown callous to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, are always ready to believe that the instruments of torture at their disposal are insufficient for their purposes. Unhappily, it is always easy to inflict pain; and in almost every yamun throughout the empire an infinite variety of instruments of torture are in constant use. To induce unwilling witnesses to say what is expected of them, they are not unfrequently made to kneel on iron chains on which their knees are forced by the weight of men standing on the calves of their legs. Others are tied up to beams by their thumbs and big toes. Others are hamstrung, while some have the sight of their eyes destroyed by lime or the drums of their ears deadened by piercing. This list might be extended indefinitely, but enough has been said to show that, like so many Chinese institutions, the penal code only faintly represents the practice which is actually in force.

Beheading is the ordinary fate of a murderer, while accessories to the deed, when not actual perpetrators, enjoy the privilege of being strangled. In the case of the murder of a mandarin the accessories as well as the principal are beheaded, and if a man strikes a mandarin so as to produce a severe cutting wound his fate is to be strangled. The charge has of late years been constantly made against missionaries, that they kill children and others to procure from parts of the body drugs for medicinal purposes. This sounds so *bizarre* that it might readily be supposed that the charge had its origin in the wild imaginations of the most

ignorant of the people. But this is not quite so. Some sanction is certainly given to the idea by the code, which provides, for instance, that "the principal in the crime of murdering, or of attempting to murder any person, with a design afterwards to mangle the body, and divide the limbs of the deceased for magical purposes, shall suffer death by a slow and painful process." Even if the crime is only in contemplation the principal offender on conviction shall be beheaded, and the chief inhabitant of the village or district who, on becoming aware of the design, shall fail to report it, shall suffer to the extent of a hundred blows.

Like most uncivilized nations the Chinese are firm believers in magic, and place full belief in those arts of the sorcerer which have a congenial home among the inhabitants of Central Africa, and of which dim traces are still to be found in the highlands of Scotland, and among the most ignorant of English rustics. Not long since the governor of the province of Kiang-su reported to the throne that "alarming rumours were circulated among the people concerning the cutting off of queues, the imprinting of marks on the body by 'paper men,' and the appearance of black monsters which played the part of incubi on sleeping persons." It would be natural to expect that the governor being learned in all the wisdom of China would have reproved these foolish imaginings, and would have used his influence to check the spread of such ridiculous rumours. But the course he took, with the subsequent approval of the emperor, was a very different one. He professed to have discovered at Soochow a "wizard," named Fêng,

and others who, after trial, were all condemned to be beheaded. Several others in different parts of the province suffered the same penalty, and a man named Hü and his wife were arrested on a confession made by Fêng, that they had imparted to him the words of the incantation necessary to invoke the "paper men." As the statements made by the Hüs were "stubbornly evasive . . . the prefect with the district magistrate and other officers . . . subjected the prisoners to repeated interrogations, continued without intermission even by night, instituting rigorous and searching inquiry in an unprejudiced spirit; as a result of which the woman Hü at length made the following confession. She acknowledged having met a man whose name she did not know, and whose manner of speech was that of a person from distant parts, who gave her some foreign money and taught her the words of an incantation, and how to send off the 'paper men' to go and crush people. She told this to her husband, and he, animated by the desire of gain, communicated the secret to their acquaintance Fêng. . . . On the woman being confronted with Hü, he made full confession to the same effect; and after it had been established by thrice repeated interrogatories that the confessions were truthful . . . the governor arrived at the conclusion that, in having been so bold as to follow the advice of an adept in unholy arts; in practising incantation; and in communicating the secret, the guilt of the two prisoners was such that death could barely expiate it. . . . He gave orders forthwith to the provincial judge, directing him to cause Hü and the woman to be subjected together

to the extreme penalty of the law, and to cause the head of Hü to be exhibited on a pole as a salutary warning. It is now ascertained on inquiry," adds the sapient governor, "that the entire province is free from practitioners of unholy arts of this description, and that the population is in the enjoyment of its accustomed tranquillity, whereby grounds are afforded for allaying the anxieties of the imperial mind." *

This case affords an excellent example of the gross superstition which exists even among the most highly educated Chinamen, and it also draws a picture which, to those who can read between the lines, stands out very clearly, of the gross cruelty and shameful abuse of the use of torture. There cannot be a doubt that Fêng, having under the influence of torture falsely confessed his own guilt, was further called upon by the same pressure to give up the names of his associates, and that, in his agony, he wrongfully implicated Hü and his wife. The "repeated interrogations" to which this couple were subjected mean the infliction of sufferings so acute that even the prospect of death became a welcome vision, and by a self-condemning lie they escaped by means of the executioner's sword from the hands of the more inhuman torturer.

It must not be supposed that this particular governor was more ignorant than the rest of his kind. The code, which was based on the laws existing during the Ming dynasty, was thoroughly revised by a committee of the highest functionaries of the realm, and received the imperial approval in 1647, after careful consideration. In it we find,

* *Translation of Peking Gazette*, Feb. 25, 1877.

therefore, the mind which was in these grandees, and that they deliberately adopted a section providing that "all persons convicted of writing and editing books on sorcery and magic, or of employing spells and incantations, in order to influence the mind of the people, shall be beheaded." Lesser punishments, on what principle awarded it is impossible to say, are incurred by magicians who raise evil spirits by means of magical books and dire imprecations, by leaders of corrupt and impious sects, and by members of superstitious associations in general. Even fortune-tellers, unless they divine by the recognized rules of astrology, are liable to be bambooed.

By analogy, persons who rear venomous animals, and prepare poisons for the purpose of murder, are treated on a par with those who commit murder to obtain magical drugs.

In all Chinese legislation the principle that the family is the basis of government is conspicuously apparent. The *patria potestas* is everywhere recognized, and it is only in supreme cases that the State interferes between the head of a household and his family belongings. If a man discovers his wife *in flagrante delicto*, and kills her on the spot, he is held blameless; and if a husband punishes his wife for striking and abusing his father, mother, grandfather, or grandmother, in such a way as to cause her death, he shall only be liable to receive a hundred blows. With equal consideration a man who kills a son, a grandson, or a slave, is punished with seventy blows and a year and a half's banishment, and this only when he falsely attributes the crime to another person. Though the code

affords no direct justification for punishing disobedient sons with death, or for infanticide, it is an incontrovertible fact that in cases which constantly occur, both crimes are practically ignored by the authorities. A particularly brutal case, of the murder of an unfilial son, was reported in the *Peking Gazette*, 1882. The report was in the form of a memorial addressed to the throne by the governor of Shansi, in which that officer stated that there had been in his district a lad named Lui, who was endowed by nature with an "unamiable and refractory disposition." On one occasion he stole his mother's head ornaments, and another time he pilfered 2000 cash belonging to her. This last misdemeanour aroused her direst anger, and she attempted to chastise him. Unwilling to endure the indignity, Lui seized her by the throat, and only released her on the expostulation of his sister. This behaviour so angered the old lady, that she determined on the death of her son. Being physically incapable of accomplishing the deed herself, she begged a sergeant of police on duty in the neighbourhood to act as executioner. This he declined to do, but softened his refusal by offering to flog Lui. To do this conveniently he bound the lad, and, with the help of three men, carried him off to a deserted guard-house on the outskirts of the village. Thither Mrs. Lui followed, and implored the men to bury her son alive. Again the sergeant declined, and emphasized his refusal by leaving the hut. The other men were more yielding, and having thrown Lui on the ground they proceeded, with the help of his mother and sister, to pull down the walls and to bury their victim in the *débris*.

When the case came on for trial it was decided "that the death in this case was properly deserved, and that his mother was accordingly absolved from all blame." The sergeant, however, was sentenced, for his comparatively innocent part in the affair, to receive a hundred blows, and the three men and the daughter each received ninety blows.

This case is significant of the supreme power which practically rests in the hands of parents, and which, *pace* the code, is exemplified by the countless acts of infanticide which go unpunished every year. In the volume of the *Peking Gazette* from which the above account is taken, a wretched case is reported, in which a husband drowned an infant born to his wife, of which he had reason to believe he was not the father. On another and subsequent issue the case came before the mandarins, but the infanticide was not so much as mentioned in the finding. Throughout the whole code sons and daughters, as well as daughters-in-law, stand at a marked disadvantage with regard to their parents. Not only is parricide punished by *lingchi*, but even for striking or abusing a father, mother, paternal grandfather or grandmother, the punishment is death; and the same penalty follows on a like offence committed by a wife on her husband's father, mother, or paternal grandparents. A still more one-sided provision ordains that "a son accusing his father or mother; a grandson, his paternal grandparents; a principal or inferior wife, her husband or her husband's parents, or paternal grandparents, shall in each case be punished with a hundred blows and three years' banishment, even if the accusation prove true, and that the individuals

so accused by their relatives, if they voluntarily surrender and plead guilty, shall be entitled to pardon." If such accusation should, however, turn out to be either in part or wholly false, "the accuser shall suffer death by being strangled."

Though neither wives nor slaves are so entirely in the hands of their husbands and masters as sons and daughters are in those of their parents, they suffer, from a Western point of view, many and great legal inequalities. A wife who strikes her husband is liable to be punished with a hundred blows, while the husband is declared to be entitled to strike his wife so long as he does not produce a cutting wound. Death by beheading is the punishment for a slave who strikes his master; but if a master, in order to correct a disobedient slave or hired servant, chastises him in the canonical way, and the offender "happens to die," the master is "not liable to any punishment in consequence thereof."

One of the strangest sections in the code is that which deals with quarrelling and fighting, and in which every shade of offence is differentiated with strange minuteness. On what part of the body a blow is struck, with what it is struck, and the result of the blow, are all set out with their appropriate penalties. Tearing out "an inch of hair," breaking a tooth, a toe, or a finger, with countless other subdivisions, are all tabulated in due form. It is commonly observed that people, and therefore nations, admire most those qualities in which they are deficient, and on somewhat the same principle Chinese legislators delight to hold up to opprobrium those social misdemeanours to which

they are most prone. If an impartial observer of Chinese manners and customs were to name the two most prominent civil vices of the Chinese, he would probably give his decision in favour of bribery and gambling. Against both these vices the code speaks with no uncertain sound. The mandarin who accepts a bribe of one hundred and twenty taels of silver and upwards, when the object is in itself lawful, or eighty taels and upwards when the object is unlawful, is pronounced guilty of death by strangulation. It is no exaggeration to say that if this law were enforced it would make a clean sweep of ninety-nine out of every hundred officials in the empire. Gambling also is denounced with equal fervour, and eighty blows is the punishment for any person found playing at any game of chance for money or for goods. The same penalty awaits, in theory, the owner of a gaming-house, with the additional fine of the loss of the house to Government. The existence of such a law, side by side with the open and palpable violation of it in streets and alleys, as well as on country roads and in village lanes, reduces it to an absurdity. At breakfast-time workmen stream out of their places of employment, and throw dice or lots for their meal at the nearest itinerant cookshop. Coolies, in moments of leisure, while away the time with cards and dice as they sit at the sides of the streets, and the gaming-houses are always full of eager excited crowds, who are willing to lose everything they possess, and more also, in satisfaction of the national craving. Like opium, games of chance have a peculiar fascination for Chinamen. One of the commonest games is known as *fantan*, and is so simple that

it can be played by any one. The croupier throws down a heap of cash, and each gambler stakes on what the remainder will be when the pile has been counted out in fours. This and other games are publicly played at the gambling-houses, the owners of which purchase security for their trade by bribing the mandarins and their police.

Quail-fighting, cricket-fighting, and public events are also made subjects of wagering, and the expected appearance of the names of the successful candidates at the local examinations is a fruitful source of desperate gambling. With the object possibly of discouraging speculation and games of chance, the code fixes the legal rate of interest at thirty-six per cent., but the enactment, if that is its object, fails signally to effect its purpose.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAWS.

It must be acknowledged that there is much, in spite of some incongruities and contradictions, to admire in the penal code of China. The seed is good; but, unhappily, it has fallen on an obdurate and uncongenial soil. Instead of wheat, the crop is largely composed of tares, and the vine produces as many sour grapes as sweet. The evil lies at the root; a universal dishonesty of mind poisons the sap of the nation, and produces all the cancers and evils which have made China a byword for deceit and corruption. *Lex aurum sequitur* is the motto which applies to the administration of the country, and in spite of high-sounding protestations in favour of honest and upright dealing, the national life is rotten to the core.

One guiding object is sought to be attained by every mandarin, and, if he is secure of this, he may, as a rule, disregard the possible frowns of his superiors. His first and last duty is to keep the people quiet and contented. If he does this he may fill his pockets with impunity, so long as no unforeseen circumstance occasions an investigation into the administration of his office.

In the Appendix to Sir George Staunton's

translation of the code a note in point is added, in which are narrated the career and ultimate downfall of a certain Ho Kwan, who rose to such high honour during the reign of K'ienlung, that the succeeding emperor, mistrusting his power, degraded him, and finally sent him to the scaffold. The man was a Tartar of mean origin, but, being gifted with a comely countenance and a prepossessing air, he gained a complete ascendency over his master and served in some of the highest posts in the empire. He had, therefore, abundant opportunities of filling his pockets, and the result proved that he had taken every advantage of them. When, after his death, his property was confiscated, it was found to consist of a wealth of money and jewels which fairly amazed the searchers, even though these were well versed in the current mode of accumulating treasure. In the words of the imperial edict, published on the occasion, "Among his treasures of pearls and precious stones, upwards of two hundred strings or bracelets of the former were discovered, many times exceeding in value those in our imperial possession. One among the pearls belonging to Ho Kwan was of an enormous size, and exceeded even that which adorns the imperial crown. There were likewise found various buttons distinguishing princely rank, carved out of precious stones, such as his situation by no means entitled him to wear. Many score of these gems were discovered, besides pieces of the same kind in the rough state, to an incalculable amount, and in an endless variety, unknown even among the imperial treasures."

"An estimate of the property of gold and silver

which has been confiscated is not yet completed, but the sum is already found to exceed many million ounces of silver.

"The avarice by which he appears to have been actuated, and the corruption by which his wealth has been amassed, cannot be equalled in the history of preceding ages."

This, no doubt, was an extreme case; but the probability is that, if the coffers of the highest ministers were searched, some would be found to contain treasures which would not fall very short of those accumulated by the unfortunate Ho Kwan. It was stated on good authority that when, in 1859, the Hoppo, or head of the customs, at Canton, resigned his post and presented himself at Peking, he was fleeced of 100,000 taels (equal in those days to £33,000) by the heads of the Government, before he had been many days in the capital; and that, notwithstanding this heavy fine, he remained a rich man. His salary at Canton was £800 per annum.

If any evidence were needed to establish the general existence of bribery in China, the *Peking Gazette* would supply the necessary material. In every volume of the *Gazette* instances are given of the universal practice. Not long since we were told of a man who, having shot a neighbour, in a *mêlée* arising out of the "Bull god" festival, was so "terrified at the consequences of his act that he got some thousands of taels together, with which he bribed the whole staff of the magistracy." As a natural result, when his case came on for trial, the magistrate passed a trifling sentence upon him, and when an appeal was made to the higher authorities, the redoubtable official stated that the culprit, when

out shooting birds, had accidentally killed his victim. Among other instances in the same volume, is one in which a man took forcible possession of his cousin, named the "Pretty Lily," and gave her in marriage to a disreputable scoundrel. Her father, who went to complain of his conduct, disappeared from the knowledge of his friends until his remains were discovered in a cave. A report having been made to the magistrate, a legal clerk with others succeeded, by dint of bribery, not only in avoiding an inquest, but in compelling the complaining relative, by the use of illegal forms of torture, to falsify his previous statements.

It does, however, sometimes happen that a mandarin may be found who is impervious to bribes. One such man was Ting, a late governor of Fuhkien. In the same volume of the *Gazette* from which the above cases are quoted (1877) this officer reported to the throne that a certain expectant prefect, named Tsiang, had forwarded him confidentially through a friend, two commercial drafts representing one thousand taels, which sum was described as an anonymous contribution to a relief fund which was being raised in the province. Accompanying this donation was a request that the governor would "take his humble aspirations into consideration." This letter, the governor states, "filled him with astonishment," and he goes on to put the pertinent inquiries why the donor had waited six months after the fund had been started before offering his gift? why it had been sent in a roundabout and confidential way? and why had he called attention to his "humble aspirations"? There can, the governor con-

siders, be only one answer to these questions, and that is that it was intended "to tempt the governor with a surreptitious offer." For this offence the incautious Tsiang was ordered to be put on his trial, and to be impeached rigorously, and the probability is that unless he had many more thousand taels at his disposal, the full penalty laid down in the code—a bambooing and three years' banishment—was inflicted on him. By the curious system of interdependence which exists in Chinese official life, it is assumed that the misconduct of a subordinate is the result of neglect and incapacity on the part of the higher officials. The governor, therefore, in this case, thinks it plain that his conduct "is incapable of commanding the confidence of his subordinates, and that he has himself only to blame for the insult that befell him," and he goes on to solicit "a rescript from His Majesty, handing him over to the Board for the adjudication of a penalty, by way of warning to those who fail to conduct themselves as is due in the relations between superior and inferior." This request the emperor was graciously pleased to ignore. In other directions the same Ting showed himself to be a man of another mould from that of his fellow-mandarins. On taking office as governor of Fuhkien, he was shocked at the way in which justice was administered by his subordinates. In a memorial addressed to the throne he stated that the "civil administration of the province had lapsed into a condition of vicious routine, one consequence of which was that unsentenced criminals and other parties to judicial cases habitually languished in prison, and frequently

died in their chains." Against the prefects and magistrates he launched various accusations on this head. The prefect of Amoy had reported to him that he had barely half a dozen prisoners in gaol, whereas, on further investigation, it was found that eighty persons were confined within the precincts of the prison. Another prefect had gone on for some time reporting that his prison was untenanted, when, as a matter of fact, twenty persons were found within its walls. "These cases," adds the governor, "may be taken as typical of the remainder. Not only is this what happens as regards the magistrates themselves, but prisoners are often confined by the underlings without the knowledge of the clerks and secretaries. . . . Farmers and labourers or petty traders once cast into prison, their entire households know not a moment's peace; and their release is not effected until land and houses, nay, it may be, wives and children, are sold, and interest is brought to bear on their behalf. The official sits at his chess and wine, while the people are offering up supplications to which there is none to lend an ear. Verily, the sound of their woes and anguish may well suffice to evoke the visitation of drought and to arouse the wrath of heaven!" In a short period, twelve hundred and forty-six prisoners were released by this governor, and he instances the case of a magistrate who could give no other explanation for the presence of a certain prisoner than that he had been handed on from one succeeding magistrate to another for many years, and that no particulars of his case were on record. One untried prisoner had been twenty years in gaol, and other instances of imprisonment for ten, eleven, and twelve years were

common. With a certain want of consistency, the governor, in another memorial, asked that, as an act of grace, indemnity for past neglect may be granted to these iniquitous magistrates. Unhappily, the emperor sanctioned this course, and thus gave to these infamous officials another lease of power in which to repeat their callous cruelties.

But the full vials of the indignant governor's wrath were reserved for the officials and underlings in Formosa, who, under shelter of comparative seclusion, exercised oppression compared with which the administration on the mainland might be considered merciful, and practised an "ineffable corruption," in the confident hope that their evil deeds would never be brought to the light. Of the worst of these people the governor determined to make examples. Where all were oppressive and corrupt, it was difficult to assign the stigma of greatest infamy to any particular set of men. But in the T'aiwan magistracy he discovered the blackest spot, and in the person of a certain clerk, named Lin, the most heinous offender. This man had originally been a member of a gang of thieves, and from that tainted society had passed into the magistrate's service, when the old leaven began to work in a new but not less profitable direction. "He was," says the governor, "notorious for his acts of villainy and oppression." Inquiry proved that "he had been guilty of innumerable acts of extortion towards the people of the district . . . and that he had accumulated a large amount of property, the result, there could be no doubt, of his lawless exactions." On these charges the man was arraigned, by the governor's order, before the

Taotai of T'aiwan, who had orders, after having elicited the facts, to have the wretched culprit "flogged to death." These orders were carried out to the letter, and "universal joy was expressed by the multitude, who declared with one voice that the district was at last delivered of a very scourge."

One of the worst features in this case was the fact that the magistrate of the district had held his office for upwards of ten years, and had blinked so consistently at his underling's atrocities that it was impossible to suppose that he was not a participator in his ill-gotten gains. But Ting had apparently exhausted his thunderbolts, and dismissal was the only and very inadequate punishment which fell to the lot of this nefarious officer.

But the governor's pencil was not always employed in arraigning his subordinates. For some few of the officials in the province he had nothing but words of praise. On them he pours out eulogies signalizing their patriotism, disinterestedness, and courage. One man is held up as a model for all others to follow, on grounds which sound amazing to people who are accustomed to go down to the sea in ships. The Pescadores Islands are not further from the mainland of China than Boulogne is from Folkestone; but to Chinamen, accustomed only to the navigation of inland waters, the voyage presents distinct and overwhelming terrors. The man in question was, the governor tells us, "a passenger from the Pescadores on board the same steamer with him on his recent return to Foochow; and, in the midst of a storm at sea, when he, the governor, clasping his pillow, was in the agonies of unintermitting sea-sickness, Wu," the

object of his eulogies, "remained pacing the deck, and making observations around him with a quiet and unmoved countenance, as though at an ordinary moment."

Corruption, however, is not the only evil which works havoc among litigants. The necessity which compels mandarins to discover at any cost the perpetrators of crimes often means ruin and sometimes death to innocent persons. A case in point agitated the courts of the Two Kiang some years ago. As this *cause célèbre* illustrates also the strange disregard for human life and the very uncertain tenure of existence which characterize life in China, it is worthy of record. In 1882 the governor-general of the Two Kiang presented a memorial to the throne, asking leave to be allowed to apply torture to an ex-official who was on his trial for extorting a confession of murder from innocent persons. It seems that in January, 1878, the dead body of a murdered man was found near the Sanp'ai Lou at Nanking. The magistrate examined the body, and found that, in addition to wounds, the queue had been cut off. Some brown paper, a packet of lime, a hatchet, and a pair of grass shoes were lying hard by. The duty of discovering the murderers was entrusted to an inspector of forces, Hung by name. With true Chinese evasiveness, he passed the order on to a Colonel Hu. This officer was a man of resource. Within a short time he produced a man named Fang, who stated that, when passing by the Sanp'ai Lou, on the night in question, he saw, by the light of the full moon, a dead body lying on the road, and three men, one of whom was a priest, standing

by it. This information sufficed for the arrest of two men called Chang and Ch'ü, with Shao, a priest. When examined before the inspector of the forces, Chang and Ch'ü confessed to the murder, and stated that their victim was a man named Hsüeh, a drover; that they had removed the body to where it was found, and had burnt his blood-stained garments. The brown paper parcel, they said, was Ch'ü's, the lime was the priest's, while the hatchet was Chang's. On these admissions having been laid before the governor-general, he ordered Ch'ü and the priest to be beheaded on the spot, while Chang, who had been more communicative than the others, was sentenced to the milder punishment of having his right ear cut off and a brand impressed on his body.

To all appearance the case was now settled, but an unexpected development reopened the whole proceedings. A certain man named Li, who was imprisoned for theft, accused two men, known as Shên and Chow, of having murdered his cousin Chu at Nanking, at the time and place in question. From the evidence adduced before the provincial treasurer it appeared that Chow had kidnapped two married women, both, as it happened, named Liu, and had hired a boat to take them south for sale. On his voyage he encountered one Chu, who was travelling in company with Shên, a Mrs. Chao, and a man named Sü. At the town of Liulo the two companies went to the same inn, and on the following morning Chu induced one of the Mrs. Liu to elope with him. At this treachery Chow was furious, his anger being accentuated by the loss entailed by the disappearance of so saleable

a commodity as the lady, and he enlisted the services of Shên for the capture of the fugitives. Armed with a hatchet, the worthy pair went to Nanking. There they presently met Chu, who, having spent all his money, was contemplating committing a burglary at an incense-shop near the Sanp'ai Lou. In ignorance of their hostile intentions, he invited the new arrivals to join in the enterprise. Taking with them some lime to throw in the eyes of their victim, Shên and Chow went to the trysting-place at midnight, where Chu had no sooner joined them than they struck him to the ground, and stabbed him to death. The next day the confederates found Mrs. Liu, whom they promptly sold, dividing the purchase money. This story was confirmed in court by Mrs. Chao and the other Mrs. Liu, to whom Chow and Shên had incautiously confided the particulars.

These contradictory statements puzzled the governor-general not a little. Why, he asked himself, if this second story is true, did the first three confess their guilt? and how could the informer, Fang, have concocted so circumstantial a story? To satisfy himself on these points, he summoned Fang before him, when that worthy added a further complication to a matter which was already sufficiently entangled. He began by flatly denying that he had either seen the body or been near the Sanp'ai Lou on the night of the murder, and stated that all he had known of the crime he had gathered from gossip in the street. He added that, when out on one occasion selling sunflower seeds, he met a militiaman, who, on pretence that he wanted to buy some of his wares, took him to

a nunnery, where he was locked up. There Hu visited him, and by means of threats and promises induced him to give the evidence which had led to the execution of Ch'ü and the priest, and the be-earing of Chang. To add to his offences, it was proved that Colonel Hu had extracted the false evidence by means of torture. For these crimes and misdemeanours the governor-general put the colonel on his trial, and, as he proved obstinate in examination, petitioned the throne for leave to examine him under torture. To this request a ready permission was given, and it was added that "severe torture should be applied to wring confession from him."

It will be observed in this case that not a word of regret is expressed, either by the governor-general of the province or the emperor, at the judicial murder of Ch'ü and the priest, and the maiming of Chang for life. Nor does it appear, either that the relatives of the executed men made any complaint of the death of their kinsmen, or that Chang raised any wail at the unjust loss of his ear. It is a well-known fact that, in times of war and peril, men are far more ready to risk their lives than in times of peace and quiet. Unhappily for the Chinese, their judicial system makes the lives and liberty of the people matters of constant uncertainty and doubt, and thus largely tends to produce the callous indifference to life which is a characteristic of the Chinese people. It not unfrequently happens that a man who has a spite against another will commit suicide on his doorstep, in order to implicate him in a charge of murder; or a woman will hang herself in an outhouse belonging to

an adversary to bring disgrace and ruin upon him. It has occurred over and over again that men have been found to take the place on the execution-ground of wealthy criminals, in return for a money payment made to their relatives. A knowledge of this fact was one of the reasons which induced Lord Elgin to determine on the destruction of the summer palace rather than call for the execution of any poor wretches whom the authorities might choose to put forward as the perpetrators of the crime which he desired to punish. Instances might be adduced without end from the pages of the *Peking Gazette* to show how precarious is the peace and quiet of any one who wears a pigtail, but there is no need to quote further cases to prove this only. In the case which follows, however, additional elements are introduced which serve to gauge the depth of the ignorance and folly of even the so-called educated classes. From the *Peking Gazette* (April 12, 1877) we learn, for example, that in 1872 a man named Ko took up his abode with his newly married wife in a house belonging to a graduate named Yang. Ko followed the respectable calling of an employé in a bean curd factory, and, from the nature of his trade, was a good deal away from home. Before long he began to suspect that Yang was paying too much attention to his wife, and sought to assure himself of the fact by listening outside the window. As it happened, all he heard were sage instructions on the works of Confucius, which Yang was imparting with earnestness to Mrs. Ko. His suspicions, however, gave rise to gossip in the neighbourhood, and on the advice of his relatives he moved to a house belonging to

a connection of his wife, who undertook to be on the watch for any visits that Yang might pay to Mrs. Ko. This watching, like Ko's eavesdropping, was without result. Ko, however, was not satisfied, and on one occasion, for the offence of unpunctuality in preparing his dinner, he chastised his wife, putting into his blows the weight of his wrath against Yang. Shortly after this he was taken ill. It was stated that, after eating a dumpling bought at a cake-vendor's shop, he was seized with symptoms of poisoning. On returning to his house, he sent his wife to buy certain medicines, which, however, gave him no relief; and presently a choking sound in his throat, and an issue of white froth from his lips, announced to his terrified wife that he was *in extremis*. His mother and her mother were quickly on the scene, but their efforts were fruitless, and he died towards evening. Until the next day his mother had no suspicion of foul play, but a rumour which then reached her, and the speedy decomposition of the remains which set in, suggested to her the propriety of lodging a complaint at the magistracy, calling for an inquest. At this ordeal an examination was made of the corpse, which led the magistrate to believe that the man had died of poison. At first he suspected that opium had been the drug employed, but was shaken in his belief by the remark of a sapient clerk that death never occurred from opium-poisoning, except when the drug had been taken by the individual of his own accord. This medical axiom, coupled with certain livid blisters on the body, led the magistrate to the conclusion that death had been caused by arsenic. This opinion was partly confirmed by the fact that

when he pierced the body with a silver probing-needle, a green stain was observable on it. In a careless moment, however, he neglected to wash the needle with the prescribed decoction of gleditschia, which, according to the highest Chinese authorites, obliterates all stains on the needle except those produced by arsenic-poisoning. Having made up his mind on the point, he interrogated the widow, and when she denied all knowledge of the crime, he applied torture to draw a confession from her. In her agonies the wretched woman confessed that Yang had given her the arsenic on a certain day in November with which to poison her husband. Yang's relatives traversed this assertion by proving an *alibi* for him on the day in question, but torture was threatened, and the fear of it made him falsify his kinsmen's evidence, and support Mrs. Ko's statements.

At this stage of the case a censor came forward and memorialized the throne, asking that punishment should be inflicted on the local authorities for their gross mismanagement of the case. The censor gives utterance to the surprise with which he is filled at the duplicity, partiality, and disregard for the interests of justice, which had been manifested by the authorities in whose presence the trial had proceeded. From the governor down to the magistrate, they were one and all guilty, he states, of having involved an innocent woman in a charge the penalty of which is execution in its most dreadful form ; and he further reflects that " there has not been a single instance, of late years, of an appeal to Peking resulting in a simple reversal of a judgment of a provincial court ; the governors-general and governors, although well aware that

injustice has been done, merely close the cases with a report to the throne that 'groundless appeals have been lodged under mistaken impressions.'"

In response to this memorial the Board of Punishments was called on to hold a fresh inquest on the body. In a clear and level space, the coffin was opened, and the coroners reported, "We find in the remains of Ko that there is no reddish exfoliation on the surface of the skull; that the upper and lower bones of the mouth, the teeth, jawbones, hands, feet, fingers, toes, nails, and joints are all of a yellowish white colour; throughout the remainder of the body the bones, of all sizes, are of the same hue, showing no signs of the effects of poison; and our verdict is that death in this case was caused by disease, and not by poison." To most people this finding would appear to be as little convincing as the earlier one, but being in agreement with canonical usage, it was accepted as being beyond the reach of cavil. The Board therefore ordered the magistrate to be put on his trial, that the reasons which induced Mrs. Ko and Yang falsely to confess to the commission of the crime might be made plain. At this inquiry the use of illegal torture was proved against the magistrate, and he was in consequence sentenced "to be transported to the province of the Amoor, under the severer form imposed by law;" and it is satisfactory to learn that to the higher authorities in the province a due measure of punishment was meted out.

The supreme ignorance of the effects of poisons displayed in this case by the magistrate and other officials is in strict keeping with the national

tendencies, and is duly sanctioned by the canonical works on the subject. The Chinese mind, though eminently adapted to receive the elements of scientific knowledge, appears to be quite incapable of extending it beyond the initial stage. In medicine, as in mathematics, they are no further advanced now than they were two thousand years ago, and it is this incapacity for improvement which makes one almost despair of the future of the race. We are sometimes reminded by apologists for the Chinese that their knowledge and administrative system are but parallel to those which existed among ourselves during the Middle Ages. But there is this vast difference between the two conditions: our ignorant and semi-barbarous usages were but a stage towards a more perfect state of being; while with the Chinese a national stagnation has stereotyped their low level of civilization, and has reproduced century after century the same mean surroundings and sordid habits. Nor, unhappily, do either the ruling classes or the people appear to have any desire to rise higher in the scale of humanity.

In the particular matter of coroners' inquests, the ignorant mandarins are guided by an equally ignorant work on the subject. As is always the case when the blind lead the blind, the author and his followers are constantly falling into the ditch of folly and error. The work in question is entitled the "Hsiyuanlu," and is as full of absurdities and superstitions as any sorcerer's almanack to be bought at the street corners of Chinese towns. It begins by warning the coroner that before opening an inquest he must be sure that there is a corpse.

In true accord with the Chinese system of suspicion and interdependence, he is recommended not to allow his intention to hold an inquiry to become known to the neighbours of the deceased person; and if, in the case of a man being wounded in a street row, his services be called into requisition before the death of the victim, he is told, strange as it may appear, that it is his duty to see that the wounded man is handed over to the care of the accused, whose interest it would be to use every endeavour to restore him to health. With delightful naïvete it is added, "The relatives of a wounded man, unless their ties be of the closest, generally desire his death, that they may extract money from the slayer!"

The "learned" compiler of this work proclaims that there are sixteen vital spots on the front of the body, and six on the back, and recommends the coroner, in case of internal bruises, to take with him a full supply of onions, red pepper, salt, white prunes, grains and vinegar, as being useful applications for the development of latent injuries. In the first instance, grains should be spread and vinegar sprinkled on the suspected spot. If when this is done, an oil-cloth umbrella is opened and held between the sun and the part, the wound should become apparent. If this method should fail, the flesh of the white prunes, added to red pepper, onions, salt, and grain, forms a compress which invariably succeeds. The anatomical knowledge imparted in this book is on a par with these strange prescriptions. A man, we are told, has three hundred and sixty bones, in accordance with the number of days which the sun takes to make a revolution in the year. From the nape of a man's

neck to the top of his head there are eight pieces of bone, except in the case of Ts'ai Chow men, who are said to be the proud possessors of nine. Why they are thus distinguished among their fellows we are not told.

An unfailing method of determining whether the bones of a deceased person are those of a parent is to cut the skin of a supposed son or daughter and let the blood drop on the bones. If they are those of the parent, the blood will sink into the bones. In the same way the blood of a parent and child, or of a husband and wife, when dropped into a basin of water, will mix. If, however, these relationships do not exist, the blood of each will float apart. There are some ruffians, says the author, who, having committed murder, burn the bodies of their victims. In such cases the coroner should by inquiry determine the spot where the cremation took place. Having found it, he should cut down the grass, burn wood and fuel on the spot until the ground has become well heated, and then scatter hemp seed on the site, when the oil from the seed will sink into the ground in the shape of a man. This will indubitably confirm the suspicion that a man has there been burnt. Further it will not take him. Among the few sensible remarks in the "Hsiyuanlu" is a warning to coroners to observe the direction of a wound, so as to determine whether a man has been murdered or has committed suicide; and in a note to the text, the following illustration of what may be done by this means is adduced. A certain coroner, suspecting that a man who had been murdered in a street row had received his death-blow from a left-handed adversary, invited the

rioters to a feast, and observing one of their number to take his food with his left hand, instantly arrested him, and had the satisfaction of drawing from him a full confession of his crime. This gleam of reason disappears so soon as the author describes symptoms. For example, a man who has committed suicide in an access of passion will, after death, have his teeth set, his eyes slightly open and looking upwards. One who has made away with himself from pent-up rage will have his eyes lightly closed and mouth slightly open. On the other hand, the man who has "shuffled off this mortal coil" by his own act to escape punishment and torture will have his eyes closed peacefully and his mouth shut, as one who "looks on death merely as a return home, and a happy release from pain and toil."

What with the invincible ignorance which characterizes all Chinese officials, and the corruption which deprives them of every sentiment which bears any affinity to honesty, it need scarcely surprise us to find how impure, unjust, and cruel are the mercies of Chinamen. It is not to be supposed, however, that there are no isolated exceptions to this general and sweeping condemnation. No doubt there are some few officials who try to do their duty to their sovereign and the people under them. But virtue is, after all, only comparative in China, and the man who there gains credit for uprightness and impartiality would probably be unable to bear the light which beats upon officials amongst ourselves. The estimation in which such exceptional mandarins are held by the people is emphasized in many ways. Their most common

method of showing regard for a high-principled magistrate is, when he is resigning his post, to take from him his boots, and hang them up in the city temple as a memorial of him. If his fame has spread abroad, as the report of such a *lusus naturæ* would probably have done, the same strange testimony to his virtue is repeated at all the towns in the province through which he passes on his way to his new office. Unhappily, however, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the people have been taught by a miserable experience to expect from their rulers greed rather than honesty, and cruelty rather than justice.

Between such officials and those over whom they are set there can be no sympathy, and, instead of looking with confidence to the arm of the law, the one object of the people is to keep as far as possible out of the reach of the yamuns. "To enter a court of justice is to enter a tiger's mouth," is a saying which embodies in a just simile the abject terror with which the people regard a summons to appear before a magistrate. This fear is begotten of a full knowledge of the horrors which await those whose fate it is to pass into the hands of the lictors and gaolers, and it not unfrequently tempts persons to commit acts of apparent and startling inhumanity rather than run the risk of being involved in legal proceedings. By a curious unreasonableness a man who exerts himself unsuccessfully to save another from deadly peril is held primarily responsible for his death, and so it comes about that, for example, the act of leaving a person to drown, when able to afford help, is to a Chinaman the most natural course to pursue. The temptation

to pass by on the other side is, therefore, great, and countless lives are lost annually by the want of outstretched hands to save in time of need.

Further, the difficulty of prosecuting appeals leaves a defrauded suppliant but faint hope of gaining any succour against injustice and wrong. The appointments to all the junior offices in a province are in the hands of the governor, who, as a rule, fills them with his own followers and *clientèle*. These, again, nominate the clerks and hangers-on to their several yamuns, and thus there is spread all over the province a combined coterie, each member of which is bound by the instinct of self-preservation to support his fellows. This community of interests gives the mandarins a free hand to act as they please, within certain well-recognized limits, and on such venial offences as misappropriation of funds, for instance, there follows no nemesis, unless the fraud be very clumsily managed. Disasters which overtake districts under their control are commonly a source of gain and profit to the officials. In such cases it is customary at once to set on foot a collection of money for the relief of the sufferers, and from the funds so subscribed a heavy tax is taken by the agents through whose hands they pass. In a memorial lately presented to the throne, it was stated by a censor that "the official clerks and underlings in the famine-stricken districts in Hunan had been guilty of divers malpractices, by means of which they had turned the imperial bounty, in the way of the remission of taxation, to their own profit . . . and had thus debarred the people from enjoying the advantages of the imperial benevolence." But even such corruption as this does not

sound the depth of official evil-doings, and a still more disastrous state of things is sometimes brought about by the collusion of mandarins and their followers with bands of robbers which disturb the mountainous and less-frequented provinces of the empire. The number of cases in which acts of wholesale robbery are left unpunished leaves a strong presumption that the general charges made of such conspiracies have a foundation in fact, and, from the *Peking Gazette*, we learn that cases of the kind are occasionally brought to the notice of the emperor. Not long since, a censor memorialized the throne in a case of the sort, and stated that the wife of a native of Fuhkien had been carried off by a band of robbers, who, finding that her husband was unable or unwilling to pay the ransom they demanded, ruthlessly murdered their captive and threw her body into a well. A complaint of the outrage was in due course laid before the magistrate, "but owing," adds the censor, "to some occult influences brought to bear, the perpetrators of the outrage were suffered to go free, and have continued to oppress and plunder the appellant since that time." Such episodes furnish writers of fiction with ready weapons with which to strike at their mandarinic characters, and police-runners are often represented as being in close and profitable league with the thieves of the district, until in the last chapter the stainlessly virtuous hero takes over the reins of power and metes out to these workers of iniquity their well-merited deserts.

In the struggle which is perpetually going on between the oppressed and the oppressors, the people suffer from the grave disadvantage of

having no legal class to interpose between them and the fiats of the mandarins. Such persons as advocates and solicitors are unknown in China, and, indeed, a man who attempted to appear for another in a court of justice would probably render himself liable to a penalty under the clause in the penal code, which orders a flogging for any person who excites and promotes litigation. All cases, however intricate, are tried by the presiding mandarin, in much the same way that a London magistrate disposes of night-charges. On both the plaintiff and defendant rests the obligation of laying their cases before the judge, without any of the assistance which enables Englishmen, under similar circumstances, to elucidate the truth of their contentions, and to establish their claims to justice.

No one who has visited English courts of justice can have failed to observe the assistance which even the most acute and erudite judges receive and acknowledge from the members of the Bar. Not only in intricate legal questions, but in the production and arrangement of evidence, judges are greatly dependent on the barristers pleading before them, and litigants feel and know that every argument will be used, and no point will be omitted to attain the presumably just object which they desire. The Chinese litigant has no such assurance. He is at the mercy of a mandarin who is probably corrupt, and perhaps both ignorant and cruel, and he is well aware that his only hope of gaining a favourable hearing is by satisfying the greed and necessities of his judge. *Quis custodiet custodes* is a question which will be asked in vain in China until some political revolution places the administrative system of the empire on a surer and purer basis.

CHAPTER V.

VILLAGE COMMUNITIES.

In the preceding chapters an effort has been made to sketch the official heirarchy, and the commonly recognized classes into which the people of the empire are divided. But it is impossible to study the popular institutions without observing traces of that early system of village communities which is still to be seen in existence in parts of India and Russia, and vestiges of which are to be discerned in many of the Teutonic countries of Europe, including our own land.

In the earliest stage of human history, family ties were doubtless unknown. The young of both sexes no sooner felt themselves independent of their parents than they deserted their homes, after the manner of the lower animals, and became strangers and outcasts to it. A great step was taken when the reciprocal duties of parents and their offspring began to be recognized. We have no traces of the beginning of civilization among the Chinese, and we do not find, therefore, any reference in their records to a condition before the *patria potestas* was established among them. In their most ancient books the family is declared to be the foundation of society. It is the unit around which the elements of social

life were gathered and from which they sprang. In their earliest communities groups of eight families were settled on as many farms of a hundred (Chinese) acres each. In the centre of the square formed by these settlements was another hundred acres, eighty of which were decreed to be common land, and twenty were set apart for the eight homesteads. Certain laws were laid down regulating the cultivation of the lands, the crops which were to be grown, and the times when each or all were to lie fallow. A proportion, which at first sight seems excessive, of the land was to be preserved as arable. But to any one acquainted with the system of farming in China the explanation of this will readily occur. It is only in lands where sheep and cattle are largely reared for food that much pasture is required. The Chinese are eminently a grain-eating people, and practically the only cattle for which grass has to be provided are the oxen which draw the plough and the horses which are used for draught. As it is now, so it was in the early days of village communities, and the probabilities are that the eighty acres set apart for grazing purposes were ample for the wants of the people. Custom also provided that four pathways should dissect the whole block, after the manner of a "Tit-tat-to" figure.

Such a community was known as a *Ching* or *Lin*, "a neighbourhood," three of which made a *Pêng*, or "association;" three *Pêng* constituted a *Li*, or "village;" five *Li*, a *Yi*, or "town;" ten *Yi*, a *Tu*, or "city;" ten *Tu*, a *Shih*, or "large city;" and ten *Shih*, a *Chow*, or "district." Thus it will seem that the towns grew out of clusters of villages, which may have been collected on given sites, either

by the positions being favourable to commerce, or by the growth of local industries.

To Chinamen the investigation of such a subject offers few attractions, and the history therefore of the steps by which this primitive system has developed into the ownership of land remains untold. But though we have no direct information on the subject, it is safe to assume that by degrees certain families would, on the re-allotment of the farms, secure by purchase the reappointment to themselves, and that eventually they would thus gain a proprietory right over the land. This is now the general condition of land-ownership in China. The allotments have disappeared, but the state of interdependence between families in villages, market-towns, and quarters in cities, engendered by their possession, continues. The affairs of each *Ching* were in the old days presided over by the heads of the eight families, and in the larger communities an extended assembly of elders adjudicated on all matters relating to the administration of their neighbourhoods. To a great extent this system exists at the present day. Now, as in the days of yore, the head of each household holds autocratic sway over all the members of his family. The very lives of his sons and daughters are in his hands, and if his conduct, however cruel towards his wife, concubines, and dependants, is not of a kind to outrage the feelings of his brother elders—and as a rule it takes a great deal to do this—it is allowed to pass without attracting the attention of any public judicial authority. So complete is the *patria potestas* that sons who have defied their parents, or who have done violence to them, are put to death with the

consent of the village assembly, or, if there should be any hesitation on their part to incur the responsibility, parents have been known to hand a rebellious son over to the mandarin of the district, who, having no such compunction, readily carries out the wish of the father.

An aggregation of such families formed the village community, every member of which was compelled to comply with the customs of the group to which he belonged. The manner of farming his allotted land; the way in which he conducted his business; and his social relations, all came under the observation and control of the elders of the community. Time has worked some transformations in the outward administration of the village, but the same spirit pervades the present system. The tendency which has been observed in other countries towards establishing an hereditary pre-eminence in one family, has in China produced the *tipao*, or headman, who is held responsible for the peace and well-being of his neighbourhood, and who is commonly assisted in his office by the elders of the village or district. This office not unfrequently descends from father to son, and is regarded as entitling the holder to the respect of the people within his jurisdiction. As in most other positions of honour, it has, however, its counterbalancing disadvantages. So long as everything goes smoothly, and no crimes are reported to the local authority, a *tipao's* position is doubtless to be envied by the less fortunate heads of households. But peace does not always reign in a Chinese village, and crimes are committed which are forced on the attention of the mandarin by plaintiffs who are

dissatisfied with the wisdom or the power of the *tipao* and the village conclave. A murder is committed, and the friends of the victim will be satisfied with nothing short of the blood of the murderer; a water-course, which serves the purpose of irrigating two farms, has been diverted to the advantage of one of the householders, and the injured farmer cannot get the reparation which he demands; or crops have been pilfered, and the sufferer cannot obtain his due. In all such cases, if the wrong is proved, the *tipao* comes in for a share of the punishment inflicted on the offender. He is flogged with more or less severity for the obvious lapse in his administration which has made such things possible, and in cases of grave import he is liable to dismissal from his post.

The object of the *tipao* is, therefore, so to exercise his authority as to prevent petitions being presented to the mandarins. In this he has the full support of the village elders, who are quite alive to the fact that that neighbourhood is fortunate which has no history. It was said by Mencius that villagers who left unheeded domestic disturbances in their neighbours' households, were to be considered as participators in the quarrels. The elders of a district, acting on this dictum, do not scruple to enter on the scenes of family broils, and to constitute themselves judges of the matters in dispute. The village or district forms one whole, and each individual in it is but a cog-wheel in the social machine. He must work with the rest, or the whole machine will get out of gear. Personality disappears, and ostracism of a complete and oppressive kind is the fate of those who venture to oppose

themselves to the public opinion of those about them. Armed with the authority derived from this condition of popular sentiment, the village elders adjust disputes of a civil nature. They settle questions of trespass, they arrange money disputes, and they grant divorces to husbands impatient of the failings of their wives. It is seldom that in such cases their decisions are not final. Frequently, however, they overstep the limits which surround civil causes, and usurp to themselves the functions of criminal judges. In this way a large proportion of criminal business never reaches the courts of the mandarins, but is adjudicated upon by the village elders, with the consent and approval of the inhabitants. Occasionally appeals are carried to public functionaries against the judgments thus given, and the magistrates, as in duty bound, express their surprise and horror that such an irregular procedure should have been followed. But this is only one of pretty Fanny's ways. It is perfectly well known to every mandarin in the empire that a vast amount of business which should fall on his shoulders is borne by his unofficial colleagues, and he is quite content that it should be so. He only bargains that, in case of necessity, he may be free to disown them and all their works.

A case of this nature was lately reported to the throne by the Viceroy of Yun-nan. That officer stated that a native of a prefecture within his jurisdiction, named Pêng, when on his way to watch over his own patch of ground, passed through a field of corn farmed by a neighbour, and in an idle moment plucked some ears of corn. On the watchman employed on the farm giving the alarm,

Pêng fled, but not before he was recognized. The farmer, on hearing of the pilfering, consulted with his landlord, and agreed with him that Pêng should be made to suffer the usual penalty of his crime, and be burnt to death. According to custom a meeting of the village elders was summoned, and the case was laid before them. After considerable discussion it was determined that the supreme punishment should be inflicted, and Pêng was, therefore, bound and placed upon the funeral pyre. In order to prevent his mother, who had pleaded in vain for his life, from reporting the matter to the mandarins, she was compelled, under threats of instant death, both to sign a paper consenting to the deed, and to set the torch to the wood which was to consume her son. In an agony of horror at the part she had been made to play, the wretched woman went straight from the execution ground to the Yamun where she presented a petition against the murderers. Upon this the magistrate arrested the farmer and his landlord, and finding that by a law, enacted in 1750, the principal offenders in a concerted murder of such a kind should suffer the capital penalty, passed sentence accordingly. The landlord, however, having died in prison, it remained only to proceed against the farmer who was beheaded in due course.

In this and similar cases we have plainly a survival of the primitive village system, and of the power which was vested in the council of elders. Like so many of our own land laws, the unwritten rules regulating the village communities, and which still regulate the affairs of each village, are the growth of centuries of custom. The *tipao* and elders rule

because the people find it to their advantage that they should do so, and each individual generally submits himself to their authority because he is part of an organization, and finds it difficult to act independently of his neighbours. It is a system which is entirely apart from the legal code, each moves on its own plane, and it is only when the planes touch, that is, when an appeal, as in the above-mentioned case, is made to the authorites, that the two systems clash.

It often happens that one family becomes the possessor of an entire village, and then we have such names as *Chang chia chwang*, "the village of the Chang family;" *Li chia chwang*, "the village of the Li family," and so on. In such cases the seniors of the clan act as the village elders. In larger communities the clans claim jurisdiction over their members, irrespective of the authority of the *tipao* and his council. The clan seniors, however, devote their attention more exclusively to the intimate personal relationships of their members than do the village elders, their object being rather to prevent scandals within their ranks than to preserve public order. In this direction they have been found useful fellow-workers with the promoters of attacks upon Christians, and in the provinces of Hunan and Hupeh they jealously guard their ranks from the imputation of heresy. Any member who is suspected of having joined the foreign religion is hailed before the clan tribunal, and is flogged or otherwise tortured in proportion to his obduracy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LITERATI AND FARMERS.

Of the four classes into which the people of China are traditionally divided, the first is that of literati or scholars. These are those who, having graduated at the Examination Halls, are waiting in the often forlorn hope of obtaining official appointments. They have certain privileges attaching to their order, and are generally recognized by the mandarins as brevet members of their own rank. They have, under certain conditions, the right of *entrée* into the presence of the local officials, and the law forbids that they should be punished or tortured until they have been stripped of their degrees by an imperial edict. As it would be beneath the dignity of a graduate to take to trade, and as there are many thousands more of them than there are places for them to fill—it was lately reckoned that there were 21,168 unemployed provincial graduates—the country is burdened with an idle population who are too proud to work, but who are not ashamed to live the life of hangers-on to the skirts of those who are better off than themselves.

As a rule they are poor men, and the temptation to enrich themselves by means of illegal exactions is often too strong for the resistance of their feeble

virtue. The glamour which surrounds their names as graduates, and the influence which they possess with the mandarins, incline the people, who by long usage are accustomed to yield, to bow their necks unresistingly to their exactions. To the mandarins they are a constant source of annoyance. They arrogate to themselves the powers which belong by right to the official class and, *hinc illæ lachrymæ*, absorb some of the illegal gains which, but for them, would naturally find their way into the exchequers of the yamuns. Not long since the governor of Kiang-si reported on the misconduct of one of these scholars, who was guilty, wrote the governor, "of making himself an agent for purposes of litigation, extorting money from inoffensive persons, monopolizing the collection of the taxes, and making the authorities subject to his dictation."

Occasionally, it is true, they intervene in the cause of justice, and in the case previously mentioned of the inquest on the man Ko, a body of thirty literati presented a justly strongly worded memorial to the throne, begging that punishment should be awarded to the incriminated magistrates. Being, however, no wiser than the rest of their race, they, though possessed of all the learning and knowledge within their reach, show the same remarkable tendency towards superstitious follies as is observable in the most ignorant of their countrymen. It is difficult to read without a smile such memorials as one which was presented to the throne, at the instigation of some local scholars, with regard to the miraculous interpositions of the god of war in favour of the town of Kiehyang in Kwangtung. "In 1844," runs this strange statement, "when the

city was threatened with capture by the leader of a secret association, the banditti were affrighted and dispersed by means of a visible manifestation of the spirit of this deity; and the efforts of the government troops in coping with the insurgents again in 1853, were similarly aided by the appearance of supernatural phenomena."

As depositories of the wisdom of the sages of antiquity, the literati pose as the protectors of the national life. In his sacred edict, K'anghsi (1662–1723) warned the people against giving heed to strange doctrines, and thus gave new expression to a celebrated dictum of Confucius, which has guided the conduct of his followers in all matters relating to foreign religions and customs. "The study of strange doctrines is injurious indeed," said the sage; and in the spirit of this saying the literati have at different periods persecuted the religions of Buddha and Laotsze with the same acrimony which is now characterizing their action towards Christianity. To foreigners and all their ways they are implacable foes, and to them we owe the spirit of opposition which was formerly shown to our landing on the shores of China, and which is now finding vent in a determined effort to drive us out of the country. The outrages on the Yang-tsze Kiang in 1891 were entirely their handiwork, and our position in China will never be assured until either their narrow ignorance is enlightened by a more liberal education than their national system supplies, or they have been made to feel the full weight of foreign subjugation. Once only in the history of the empire have they in their turn suffered persecution. The same emperor who built the great wall, and established

for himself an empire, sought to confirm his power by destroying the national literature, and by beheading all those scholars who still clung to the traditions of their fathers. It is said that persecution strengthens the character and improves the moral fibre of its victims. This persecution in the third century B.C. may for a time have had such salutary effects; but, if so, all traces of these virtues have long been swept away, and China has become possessed of a race of scholars who for ignorance, bigotry, violence, and corruption, are probably unsurpassed by educated men in any country calling itself civilized.

Under happier circumstances the existence of this large body of scholars might be of infinite advantage to the literature of the country. With time to work and opportunities for research they might add lustre to the writings of their countrymen and enlarge the borders of their national knowledge. But the system of looking backwards for models of excellence, rather than forwards, has so contracted the field of their labours, that those who write only add commentary to commentary on works already annotated beyond recognition. Instead of striking out for themselves new grounds of investigation, they have deliberately chosen the futile task of perpetually fixing their eyes on a particular object in a particular way, with the natural result that their vision has become contracted and their minds moulded on narrow and pedantic lines. The mental activity of these men, not having, therefore, any power to operate in a beneficent way, exerts itself with unprecedented vigour and hardihood in local affairs. No dispute arises but one or more of these

social pests thrusts himself forward between the contending parties, and no fraud on the revenue or wholesale extortion is free from their sinister influence. The case of Chow Han, who lately instigated the anti-Christian crusade in Hunan, furnishes an instance of the overwhelming power which these men are occasionally able to exert. To him are due the infamous placards which were lately used to stimulate the outbreaks against foreigners at Wusueh and other places; and when the crime was brought home to him, and the Tsungli Yamun, at the instance of the foreign ministers, ordered his arrest, not only did the viceroy of the province fail to comply with the command, but he actually released, at the bidding of the offender, a man charged with active participation in the riots. It is true that a futile commission was sent into Hunan to investigate the charges against him, but instead of bringing him to justice, the commissioners pronounced him mad, and recommended that he should be left untrammelled, except by a mild system of supervision.

In common estimation the workers of the soil stand next to the literati. From the earliest dawn of legendary history agriculture has been regarded as a high and ennobling calling. To Shennung, the divine husbandman, one of the legendary emperors of ancient China, who is said to have lived 2737 years B.C., is ascribed the invention of the plough and the first introduction of the art of husbandry. The connection thus established between the throne and the plough has been kept up through all succeeding ages, and at the present time the emperor, in the early spring of each year,

turns a furrow to inaugurate the beginning of the farming season; an example which is followed in every province by the viceroy or governor, who follows suit in strict imitation of his imperial master. With the same desire to set an example to her sex, the empress, so soon as the mulberry-trees break into foliage, follows the gentler craft of picking the leaves to supply food for the palace silkworms. "Give chief place," wrote the Emperor K'anghsi, "to husbandry and the cultivation of the mulberry-tree, in order to procure adequate supplies of food and raiment;" to which excellent advice his son added, "Suffer not a barren spot to remain in the wilds, or a lazy person to abide in the cities; then a farmer will not lay aside his plough and hoe; nor the housewife put away her silkworms or her weaving." These commands have sunk deep into the national character, and the greatest devotion to their calling, sharpened, it is true, by a keen sense of self-interest, is everywhere shown by Chinese farmers. From these men it is impossible to withhold the highest praise for their untiring industry. With endless labour and inexhaustible resource they wrest from the soil the very utmost that it is capable of producing. Unhappily to them, as to other classes of the community, the law as it is administered is oppressively unjust. It makes them poor and keeps them poor. The principal imperial tax is derived from the land, and by the law of succession it is generally necessary, on the decease of the head of the family, to subdivide his possessions, which thus become a diminishing quantity to each generation of successors to his wealth. Low grinding poverty is the result, and

it is remarkable, though not surprising, to observe the large number of crimes which are attributable to disputes arising out of feuds in connection with the inheritance of the land and its products.

Probably there is no potentate on the earth who can say as truly as the Emperor of China can, "L'empire c'est moi." Not only the lives and property of his subjects are at his disposal, but the land which they till is part of the heritage which belongs to him. Just as he alone sacrifices to Heaven, and as he alone is the one emperor over all the earth—in accordance with the dictum of an ancient sage, "There is one sun in the sky and one emperor over the earth"—so he is the universal landlord of the soil of China. Although the empire as a whole is thickly populated, there are always some districts which remain uncultivated. To find a parallel to the agricultural condition of the country, we must look to our colonial empire, where settlers apply for uninhabited lands, and receive the rights over them in exchange for small annual payments. This is the principle on which lands have been appropriated in times past, and still are leased out to farmers. As a rule, the land so let is taken up by a clan, the members of which cultivate it much on the principle of the village communities described in a preceding chapter. Ten families constitute, as a rule, a village holding, each family farming about ten acres. To such a community is allotted a common village plot, which is cultivated by each family in turn, and from which the tribute grain is collected and paid. The surplus, if any, is divided between the families. Towards the end of the year a meeting is held, at which a

division of the profits is made on one condition. Any farmer who is unable to produce the receipt for the income-tax on his farm ceases to be entitled to any benefit arising from the village plot. The land is classified according to its position and productiveness, and pays taxes in proportion to the advantages which it enjoys. Ten shillings per acre is an average rental for the best land. It was lately complained, in a memorial to the throne, that by faulty administration the tax frequently amounted to six times its nominal assessment. By way of a set-off against this exaction, a merciful provision in the law lays it down that a farmer who reclaims lands from a state of nature shall be allowed to reap five harvests before being visited by the tax-collector.

It often happens that an unjust government, by timely concessions, gains for itself credit for wisdom and lenity when it is entitled to approval only for having had the wit to see exactly how far the people will endure the weight of its exactions. Such popularity is gained as easily as a spendthrift acquires a reputation for generosity, and is enjoyed by the Chinese government by virtue of certain exemptions from the land-tax, which are granted when the country labours under aggravated circumstances of distress. When the emperor passes through a district, it may be on a visit to the imperial tombs, the people are required to contribute their labour, and the magnates their money, towards making smooth the way before him. The presence of the potentate disarranges the course of existence and the prosecution of industries in the neighbourhood. Fields are left unploughed and crops

unsown until the tyranny is overpassed, and for the benefit of the sufferers the land-tax for the year is forgiven them. The same indulgence is granted to farmers in provinces which are visited with long droughts, excessive floods, or plagues of locusts. The probability is that the government, recognizing that the attempt to enforce the tax in such districts would be futile, has the wisdom to make a virtue of necessity. The grain-tax is also levied from the lands classified as "good," and this, with the land-tax, the salt-tax, and customs dues, form the main bulk of the revenue of the empire. According to a recent calculation, these sources of revenue produce 79,500,000 taels, or about £19,875,000. In a country such as China, which is subject to every variety of temperature, from tropical heat to almost arctic cold, the products are necessarily as various as the systems of agriculture are different. In the southern provinces, where rice is the staple crop of the farmer, irrigation is an absolute necessity. The rice plants are put out in fields inundated with water, and the crops are gathered in when the ground is in the same condition. This need makes it imperative that the fields should be banked in, and that a constant supply of water should be obtainable. For this last purpose the farmers exercise that particular ingenuity with which they are especially endowed. Wherever it is possible, streams from the hills are carried by aqueducts to the different farms, and the water is distributed by minute channels in such a way as to carry the fertilizing current to the various fields and crops. When such supplies are wanting, water is raised from canals, rivers, and wells in several ways. By

a system of buckets fastened to an endless chain, and passing over an axle, which is turned either by the feet of men or by a connecting-wheel worked by oxen, the water is raised from the river or canal to the level of the fields, where it is discharged into troughs at the rate sometimes of three hundred tons *per diem*. This is the *saḳiyeh* of the Egyptians; and should any traveller from the banks of the Nile visit the plains of China, he might recognize in the method adopted for raising water from wells the *shadūf* of the land of the Pharaohs. A long horizontal pole, at one end of which is a bucket, and on the other end a certain weight, is fixed on an upright in such a position that on raising the loaded end the bucket descends into the well, and with the help of the counterbalancing weight can be raised full of water with ease and rapidity. If the level of the river or canal be only triflingly lower than the field to be irrigated, two men standing on the bank and holding a bucket between them by ropes draw water with great rapidity by dipping the bucket into the stream and by swinging it up to the bank, where its contents are emptied into the trough prepared to receive them.

In the north of the country, where wheat, millet, and other grains are largely grown, the rain supply in summer and the snow in winter furnish all the moisture which the farmers require in ordinary years. But whether in the north or in the south, the greatest care and ingenuity are used in providing manure for the land. Nothing is wasted. The usual animal and vegetable manures are carefully collected and spread over the fields, while scraps of all kinds which

contain any fertilizing matter, and which in most countries are disregarded, are turned to account by these most frugal tillers of the soil. Accustomed as we are to large farms and extended systems of agriculture, Chinese farms appear to partake more of the nature of market gardens than of agricultural holdings. The implements used are primitive in the extreme, and are such as, we learn from the sculptures, were used in ancient Assyria. Two only may be said to be generally used, the plough and the hoe. The first of these is little more than a spade fastened to a single handle by bamboo bands. As a rule, it is drawn by a buffalo, or buffaloes, and some travellers even claim to have seen women harnessed in the same yoke with these beasts of burden. From the shape of the share the Chinese plough does little more than disturb the surface of the soil, and rarely penetrates more than four or five inches. In the compound character which is used to express it on paper (犁), the use of oxen as beasts of draught, and the results which it is instrumental in bringing about, find expression in the three component parts—oxen, sickle, and grain. The spade is seldom used, and the hoe is made to take its place. Rakes and bill-hooks complete the farmer's stock-in-trade. The bamboo, which is made to serve almost every purpose, forms the material of each part of the rake; while the bill-hook has a treble debt to pay, serving as a pruning-knife in the spring, a scythe in the summer, and a sickle when the grain is ripe to harvest.

One of the earliest works existing in the language is an agricultural calendar, which describes

the various processes of nature and the industries of the agriculturist throughout the year. It warns the farmer when to look for the first movements of spring, and describes for his benefit the signs of the different seasons. It tells him when to sow his seed, and when he may expect to reap his harvest; and it follows with the love of a naturalist the movements and habits of the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. This work was penned in about the eighteenth century B.C., and since that time the dignity which attaches by tradition to agriculture has led to the publication, from time to time, of large and numerous works on the subject. Probably two of the best known of these books illustrate the two leading branches of the farmer's art, the cultivation of rice and the growth of the mulberry for the food of silkworms. Every process in both industries is minutely described and illustrated. The glimpses which these pictures give us of country life in China suggest a domesticity and brightness which form a strong contrast to the fate of the poorer classes whose lots are cast in the crowded lanes and streets of the cities. Madame de Staël said in one of her books that she had travelled all over Europe and had met with nothing but men and women. We may extend the range to China, and may see in the pictures drawn in the above-mentioned work, of the farmyards, the dwellings, the kitchens, and the store-rooms of the silk producers of China, pleasing parallels to the brighter aspects of English agricultural life. The employment of women in arranging and managing the silkworm industry, gives an interest to their lives, and is a sure preventive against that *ennui* which

so often overtakes the unemployed women of the cities. The cultivation of silk can be traced back almost as far as the beginning of agriculture, and up to the advent of the Mongol dynasty, in the thirteenth century, it flourished exceedingly. With the arrival, however, of the hordes of Jenghis Khan came the introduction of Indian cotton, which, from its cheapness and utility, was speedily preferred to the silken products of the looms of China. For four hundred years the industry was neglected, and continued to exist only in the provinces of Szech'uan, Honan, Kwangtung, and Chehkiang, where just enough stuff was manufactured to supply the wants of the government and the local consumers. With the establishment of the present Manchu dynasty and the arrival of foreigners, the demand for the material which had given its name to China all over the ancient world—serica—led to a revival of the industry, and at the present time silk is produced in every province in the empire. In those northern districts where the cold forbids the growth of the mulberry-tree the worms are fed on a kind of oak—the *Quercus Mongolica*—while all over the central and southern provinces the mulberry orchards bear evidence of the universality of the industry. At Ning-po alone a hundred thousand bales of silken goods are turned out every year, and in most of the districts of central China the people are as dependent for their livelihood on the trade as the people of England are on the production of coal and iron. The prefect of Soochow, desiring to take advantage of this widespread calling, lately proposed to levy a small tax on every loom. The result, however, proved that his power

was not commensurate with his will. The people refused as one man to pay the assessment, and threatened to stop their looms if the tax were insisted upon. The matter was referred to Peking, and with the cautious wisdom which characterizes the action of the Government towards the people, the proposal was left unenforced.

A crop as general, or even more general than silk, is opium. In every province the poppy is grown in ever-increasing quantities, and in Yun-nan, one of the principal producing regions, the late Mr. Baber estimated, as a result of his personal experience, that poppy-fields constituted a third of the whole cultivation of the province. It is difficult to determine when the poppy was first grown in China, but the references to it which are met with in the literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries confirm the fact that it was then cultivated, and that the same kind of cakes were made from the seeds of the plant as are now commonly eaten in the province of Szech'uan. The habit of smoking opium is of a far later date, and gave rise to a marked opposition to the drug by the Government of the country. But, like most Chinese enactments, the one forbidding the habit was only partially enforced, and it is certain that the practice of smoking opium had become confirmed among the people before the Indian drug was first imported. From that time until within the last few years the Government showed a pronounced hostility to the trade, but stultified its professions by never effectually carrying out its own prohibitions against the growth of the poppy. Several motives conduced to these results. The growth of the poppy not only brought

large profits to the farmers, but filled the pockets of the mandarins, who, while protesting against the cultivation, accepted bribes to ignore the evidence of their eyes. Repeated imperial edicts became dead letters in face of these opposing interests, and year by year the white patches widened and multiplied throughout the empire. In a country like China, where the value of careful statistics is unknown, it is difficult to arrive at any accurate idea as to the number of opium-smokers in the country. In Szech'uan it is reckoned that seven-tenths of the adult male population smoke opium. On the shores of the rivers and canals the practice is universal, and affords the people the same relief from malarial fevers that the peasants in the fens of Lincolnshire derive from eating morphia. By all such people the native opium is the only form obtainable, and at Tiensin it is estimated that nine chests of native opium are consumed to one chest of the foreign preparation. It is always dangerous *ex uno discere omnes*, but there is no reason to suppose that this proportion does not hold good for the empire as a whole. Since the legalization of the opium trade (1860) even the nominal restrictions placed upon native growers have been withdrawn, and the Government has the advantage of deriving a large revenue from the crops. From the province of Kansuh, which is one of the poorest in the empire, the tax on opium amounts to at least twenty thousand dollars a year, and this in face of the constant complaints published in the *Peking Gazette* of the smuggling which prevails in that and other districts. The small compass into which opium can be packed encourages illicit traffic in it. Candidates for

examination going to their provincial cities, merchants travelling from province to province, and sailors trading between the coast ports, find it easy to smuggle enough to supply their wants; while envoys from tributary states whose baggage by international courtesy is left unexamined, make full use of their opportunities by importing as much of the drug as they can carry free of duty. Some years ago, when an imperial commissioner was entering the port of Canton, the custom-house authorities had notice given them that the commissioner's followers were bringing a large venture disguised as personal effects in their luggage. The question arose what was to be done, and, with the timidity common to subordinate officials, the provincial authorities determined to ignore the information they had received rather than offend so potent a magnate as the commissioner. By this dereliction of duty the customs were the poorer by some twenty thousand taels.

So portable is the drug in its prepared state that in the provinces, where silver is not always obtainable, it is used as currency, and travellers are commonly in the habit of paying their hotel bills with pieces of opium of the value demanded by the landlord. This is not the place to discuss at length the effect of opium-smoking on the people. The whole subject, however, is so surrounded with sentimental enthusiasm that a fact, however small, bearing on the question is worth recording. It is commonly said by the opponents of the trade that so pernicious a hold does the habit of smoking acquire over those who indulge in it that only by the use of palliatives can a

confirmed smoker be weaned from the habit without endangering his life. One fact disposes of this assertion. In the Hong Kong gaol, where opium-smokers of every degree of habituation are constantly imprisoned, no notice is taken of their craving for the drug, and no remedies are found necessary to relieve their sufferings. By deprivation they are cured for the time being of the habit, and in no instance have fatal consequences resulted from this Spartan method. Unmindful of the lesson thus taught, missionaries are not unfrequently in the habit of attempting to cure opium-smokers by administering morphia pills. That they effect cures by this means is very certain, but the doubt arises whether the remedy is not worse than the disease. The processes through which the opium has to go before it reaches the lungs of the smoker unquestionably deprive it of some of its deleterious ingredients. When, however, opium is eaten in the shape of morphia, the safeguards provided by the pipe are absent, and the man who gives up his pipe for the pill finds that his last state is worse than his first.

Next to silk, however, the product which we most nearly associate with China is tea, which proclaims its nationality by the two names *tea* and *ch'a*, by which it is known all over the world. We, who took our first cargoes from the neighbourhood of Amoy, know it by the name, or rather our grandmothers knew it by the name, by which it is known in that part of China. *Tè* is the Amoy pronunciation of the word which is called ch'a in the central, western, and northern provinces of the empire. The Russians, therefore, who have always

drawn their supplies through Siberia, call the leaf *ch'a*, while the French and ourselves know it by its southern name. There is reason to believe that the plant has been known and valued in China for some thousands of years, and in one of the Confucian classics mention is made of the habit of smoking a leaf which is popularly believed to have been that of the tea plant. But however this may be, it is certain that for many centuries the plant has been cultivated over a large part of Central and Southern China. At the present time the provinces of Hunan, Fuhkien, Kwangtung, and Ganhwuy produce the best varieties. From them we get our Souchong, Flowery Pekoe, Oolong, Orange Pekoe, and green teas; and it is in those provinces that the competition of the teas of India and Ceylon is most severely felt.

No doubt the farmers have themselves principally to blame in this matter. The long monopoly which they enjoyed tempted them to palm off on their customers teas of an inferior kind. Trees which had long passed the normal period of bearing were robbed of their leaves to fill the chests sent to London and Paris; pruning was neglected, and weeds were left to grow apace. The inevitable nemesis followed, and now, when too late, the farmers are becoming conscious of the folly of their neglect. In ordinary times great care is taken in selecting the seed, and when after careful tending the seedlings have reached a height of four or five inches, they are planted out in the plantations in rows, two or three feet apart. For two years the plant is allowed to grow untouched, and it is only at the end of the third year that

it is called upon to yield its first crop of leaves. After this the plant is subjected to three harvests: namely, in the third, fifth, and eighth months. The leaves when plucked are first dried in the sun, and the remaining moisture is then extracted from them by the action of nude-footed men and women, who trample on them, as Spanish peasants tread out the juice of the vine. They are then allowed to heat for some hours, and after having been rolled in the hand, are spread out in the sun, or, if the weather be cloudy, are slowly baked over charcoal fires. Among the wealthier natives the infusion is not generally made as with us, in tea-pots, but each drinker puts a pinch of tea into his cup, and, having added boiling water, drinks the mixture as soon as the full flavour of the tea has been extracted, and before the tannin has been boiled out of the leaves. By high and low, rich and poor, the beverage is drunk, and the absence of nervous affections among the people is strong evidence of the innoxious effect of the infusion in this respect. Not only is it drunk in every household in the empire, but tea-houses abound in the cities, in the market-places, and by the highways. Like the London coffee-shops in the time of the Stuarts, the tea-houses in the cities form the places of meeting between merchants for the transaction of business, and between friends, who congregate to discuss local affairs and the latest official scandals. Women only are, by social regulations, excluded from these hospitable places of entertainment, which commonly occupy prominent positions in the principal streets of towns. But where such sites are not easily attainable, Buddhist priests, with a fine

disregard for the holiness of their temples, very commonly let off a portion of the precincts to enterprising tea-men.

Although, as has been said, tea was known and used at a very early period in China, it failed to make its appearance in Europe until the end of the sixteenth century. Pepys, in his diary, speaks of a cup of tea much in the same way that we talk of a glass of the choicest liqueur, and mentions the fact of his wife taking it as a part of a medical prescription. The importation of 4713 lbs. of the leaf in 1678 was regarded as an event of unparalleled commercial enterprise; but, as time advanced, the habit of tea-drinking spread rapidly, and in 1725, 37,500 lbs. were imported into England. Much as these quantities were wondered at at these dates, they form but insignificant totals compared with the cargoes which now annually reach our shores. In the year 1891, 48,073,781 lbs. passed through the English custom-house.

The form in which tea is exported for general European use is not that which is suited for land transport. In carrying goods by road cubic space is a matter of vital importance. For centuries the Chinese have supplied the Tibetans with tea in so compressed a form as to be readily portable by carts, on beasts of burden, or on men's shoulders. In these ways it has long been customary to carry bricks of tea across the mountain ranges which mark the western frontier of China; and when a demand for tea sprang up in Russia, like circumstances suggested a like method. The principal place for preparing the brick tea is Hankow, where six or more factories are constantly engaged in the

manufacture of it. Something has to be sacrificed to expediency, and it is incontestable that the Russians and other consumers of brick tea lose in flavour what they gain by the smaller compass. The dust of tea, and therefore a poor kind of tea, is best suited for forming bricks, and even the inferiority thus entailed is increased by the process employed to weld the masses together. This is done by a method of steaming, which encourages an evaporation of both flavour and freshness, and when it has effected its purpose by moistening the dust, the mixture is put into wooden moulds and pressed into the shape of bricks. It is left to stand in the moulds for a week, and the bricks are then wrapped up separately in paper and packed in bamboo baskets, sixty-four filling a basket. 42,973,896 lbs. of tea prepared in this way were exported last year to Russia and Japan.

The growers of silk and of tea are to the ordinary agriculturists of China what large hop-growers among ourselves are to the holders of twenty-acre farms. As a rule, they are rich and well-to-do men, whereas the ordinary agriculturist is raised little above the rank of a peasant, and has little to congratulate himself upon beyond the fact that his calling is held up to general approbation, and that it inherits a record which is as old as that of the race itself.

CHAPTER VII.

MECHANICS AND MERCHANTS.

NEXT to farmers in popular estimation stand mechanics, and even a deeper state of poverty than that which afflicts agriculturists is the common lot of these men. They live perpetually on the verge of destitution, and this from no fault of their own and in spite of their untiring devotion to their callings. No one can have seen these men at work in the streets, or in their workshops, without being struck with the indefatigable industry which they display. From an hour in the morning at which European workmen are still in bed until a time at night long after which the same men have ceased to toil and spin, the patient Chinaman plods on to secure for himself and family a livelihood which would be contemned by all but the patient Asiatic. As in every branch of science and art, mechanics in China have remained for centuries in a perfectly stagnant condition. The tools and appliances which were good enough for those who worked and laboured before our era, still satisfy the requirements of Chinese craftsmen. The rudest tools are all that a workman has at his disposal, and the idea never seems to occur to him that an improvement in their structure is either called for or necessary.

The abundant population and over-crowded labour market may have something to do with the disinclination of the people to the use of labour-saving machinery. It is not so long ago that, among ourselves, there arose an outcry that the adoption of railways would be ruin to all those who made their living by the earlier methods of travelling, and it need not therefore surprise us to find Chinamen ranging themselves in opposition to any contrivances which may appear to compete with human labour. The mason who wishes to move a block of stone knows no better means for the purpose than the shoulders of his fellow-men supplemented by bamboos and ropes. The carpenter who wants to saw up a fallen tree does so with his own hand, without a thought of the easier device of a saw-mill. So it is with every branch of industry. Many of the contrivances employed are extremely ingenious, but since their invention no further advance has been made towards relieving the workman from any part of his toil. In many cities, Canton, for example, bricklayers and carpenters stand in the street for hire, and often, unhappily, remain all the day idle. Even when employed their wages are ridiculously small compared with the pay of their colleagues in Europe, whose hours of labour are short compared with theirs, and whose relaxations furnish a relief from toil to which Chinamen are complete strangers. In the higher branches of mechanical skill, such, for instance, as gold, silver, and ivory work, Chinamen excel, and they are exceptionally proficient in the manufacture of bronzes, bells, lacquer ware, and cloisonné. With the appliances at their command their skill in casting bells

of great size and sonorousness is little short of marvellous. The famous bell at Peking weighs 120,000 lbs., and is one of five of the same weight and size which were cast by order of the Emperor Yunglo (1403–1425). Like all Chinese bells, it is struck from outside with a mallet, and its tones resound through the city to announce the changes of the watch.

A feature in the workaday life of China is the number of itinerant craftsmen who earn their livelihood on the streets. Every domestic want, from the riveting of a broken saucer to shaving a man's head, is supplied by these useful peripatetics. If a man's jacket wants mending, or his shoes repairing, he summons a passing tailor and cobbler, and possibly, while waiting for his mended clothes, employs the services of a travelling barber to plait his queue, or it may be to clean his ears from accumulated wax. Even blacksmiths carry about with them the very simple instruments of their trade, and the bellows which blow the flame are commonly so constructed as to serve when required as a box for the tools and for a seat to rest the owner when weary.

It is characteristic of Chinese topsy-turvydom that that class of society which has done most to promote the material prosperity of the nation, should, in theory at least, be placed on the lowest rung of the social ladder. The principle, "that those who think must govern those who toil," is justly upheld in China, but why the men who have made her the rich country which she is, and who have carried the fame of her wealth and power into every market in Asia, should be subordinate in the

social scale to labourers and mechanics it is difficult to understand. The merchants and traders of China have gained the respect and won the admiration of all those who have been brought into contact with them. For honesty and integrity they have earned universal praise, and on this point a Shanghai bank manager, in lately acknowledging a valedictory address, presented to him on his leaving the country, bore the following testimony: "I have," he said, "referred to the high commercial standing of the foreign community. The Chinese are in no way behind us in that respect; in fact, I know of no people in the world I would sooner trust than the Chinese merchant and banker. . . . I may mention that for the last twenty-five years the bank has been doing a very large business with Chinese at Shanghai, amounting, I should say, to hundreds of millions of taels, and we have never yet met with a defaulting Chinaman." It was such men as these that built up the commerce which excited the wonder and admiration of Marco Polo and other early European travellers; and it is to their labours and to those of their descendants that the existence of the crowded markets, the teeming wharfs and the richly laden vessels of the present day are due. However much in theory the Chinese may despise their merchant princes, their intelligence gains them a position of respect, and their riches assure them consideration at the hands of the mandarins, who are never backward in drawing on their overflowing coffers. It is noticeable that while novelists are never tired of satirizing the cupidity of the mandarins, the assumption of the literati, and the viciousness of the priesthood, they

refrain from reflections on a class which at least honestly toils and only asks to be allowed to reap the rewards of its own untiring industry.

As for everything else in China, a vast antiquity is claimed for the beginning of commerce. In the earliest native works extant mention occurs of the efforts made to barter the products of one district for those of another, and to dispose of the superfluous goods of China by exchange with the merchandise of the neighbouring countries. The subject was not considered beneath the notice of the earliest philosophers, and Confucius on several occasions gave utterance to his views on the matter. Wise as many of his sayings were, it is a fact that his dicta on practical affairs were for the most part either platitudes or fallacies. It is not difficult to determine in which class his best quoted pronouncement on trade should be placed. "Let the producers," said the sage, "be many and the consumers few. Let there be activity in the production and economy in the expenditure. Then the wealth will always be ample." It might have occurred even to Confucius that, if the producers of a certain commodity were in the majority, and the consumers in the minority, the only people who could possibly benefit would be the few, more especially if they further reduced the demand for the product by following the philosopher's advice and practising economy in the use of it.

Fortunately, the merchants of China have not found it necessary to accept Confucius as an infallible guide in mercantile concerns; and they, in common with the rest of their countrymen, have benefited by the disenthralment from the bondage

which still binds the literary classes to the chariot-wheels of the sage. The same problems which were at an early date worked out in the commercial centres of Europe have been presented for solution to the frequenters of the marts in the Flowery Land. Long before the establishment by Lombard Jews of banks in Italy (A.D. 808), the money-changers of China were affording their customers all the help and convenience which belong to the banking system; and three hundred years before the establishment at Stockholm of the first bank which issued notes in Europe, paper currency was passing freely through all the provinces of the empire. A later development of trade has been the adoption of guilds, whose halls are often among the handsomest buildings to be met with in the busy centres of trade. The idea first took shape in a curious way. Provincial mandarins on visiting the capital found that they were quite unable to cope singly with the exactions of the officials and the insults which their local pronunciations and provincial attires drew upon them from the people. They determined, therefore, to combine for mutual protection, and to establish guilds as common centres for protection in case of need, and for the more congenial purpose of social intercourse.

Strange as it may seem to those who only hear of the opposition shown by Chinamen to foreigners, it is yet a fact that a like hostility, though in a mitigated form, is commonly displayed towards natives of other provinces and districts. Like the provincial mandarins at Peking, travelling merchants found the advantage of being able to show a united front to the annoyances which they suffered from

the natives of "outside provinces," and, following the example set in the capital, they founded provincial guilds in all parts of the country where trade or pleasure made their presence either necessary or convenient. Natives of Canton visiting Chehkiang or Hunan are now no longer subjected to the insults to which they were accustomed at the native inns. In their provincial guilds they may count on security and comfort, and, if merchants, they are sure to find among the frequenters of the clubs, either customers for their goods or vendors of the products which they may wish to buy. The more strictly mercantile guilds serve invaluable purposes in the promotion of trade. Each is presided over by a president, who is helped in the administration by a specially elected committee and a permanent secretary. This last is generally a graduate, and thus in virtue both of his literary rank and of his connexion with the guild has ready access to the mandarins of the district. Through his instrumentality disputes are arranged, litigation is often prevented, and the *Lekin* taxes due from the members of the guild for the passage of their goods into the interior of the country are compounded for by lump sums.

The revenue of the guilds is derived from a payment of one-tenth of one per cent. on all sales effected by members. At first sight this percentage appears insignificant, but so great is the volume of internal trade, that the amount realized not only covers every requirement, but furnishes a surplus for luxurious feasts. In one guild at Ning-po the reserve fund was lately stated to be 700,000 dollars, to which must be added the amount realized by the

deposit exacted from each new member of 3000 dollars. Against the income account must be set down large out-goings in several directions. In the case of a member going to law with the sanction of the guild he receives half his law expenses, and a not inconsiderable sum is yearly disbursed in payment of the funeral expenses of those members who die away from their homes. Besides these out-goings money is advanced on cargoes expected, and is lent for the purchase of return ventures. The rules regulating the guilds are numerous and are strictly enforced. The favourite penalty for any infraction is that the offender shall provide either a theatrical entertainment for the delectation of his brother members or a feast for their benefit. If any member should be recalcitrant and refuse to submit to the authority of the committee, he is boycotted with a severity which might well excite the emulation of promoters of the system in the Emerald Isle.

Allied to these mercantile associations are the guilds which are strictly analogous to the trades-unions among ourselves. Each trade has its guild, which is constituted on precisely the same lines as those above described. So far as it is possible to judge, the action of the Chinese trades-unions appears to tend to the promotion of fair play and a ready kind of justice. Unjust weights, or unfairly loaded goods, are unhesitatingly condemned, and substantial fines are inflicted on members found guilty of taking advantage of such iniquities. By the influence of the unions wages are settled, the hours of work are determined, and the number of apprentices to be taken into each trade is definitely fixed. Silk-weavers are not allowed to work after

nine o'clock in the evening, nor are any workmen permitted to labour during the holidays proclaimed by the guild. Not long since, at Wênchow, the carpenters were called upon by the mandarin to contribute more than the recognized work of one day in the year for the repairing of public buildings. The men struck, and the mandarin, fearing a popular tumult, was wise enough to give way. Perhaps, also, the recollection of a terrible retribution which was, in 1852, meted out to a magistrate near Shanghai, for blindly ignoring the just demands of the people under him, may have encouraged a yielding disposition. In this instance the people, in an access of rage such as that to which Chinamen are occasionally subject, and which in an instant converts them from peaceful citizens into brutal savages, invaded the magistrate's yamun, and, having made the wretched man their prisoner, bit off his ears, each man taking his part in the outrage to prevent the possibility of a separate charge being brought against any particular rioter.

An even more brutal display of violence took place at Soochow, about twenty years ago. It happened that more gold leaf was required for the use of the emperor's palace than the trade as constituted at Soochow could supply. In this difficulty the master manufacturer took the unwise step of asking the leave of the magistrate to engage extra apprentices. Possibly with the knowledge that no one had been punished for the atrocity described above, which, having occurred in the neighbourhood, must have been well known, they determined to inflict an even more brutal punishment on the erring manufacturer. "Biting to death is not a capital

offence," was proclaimed amongst them, and, acting upon this dictum, they captured the offender and literally bit him to death.

On being admitted as an apprentice a lad has, as a rule, to stand treat to the workmen, and in the more skilled trades he has to serve five years before he is admitted to the rank of journeyman. Though the conduct of these societies is generally beneficial, they are occasionally apt, like all similarly constituted bodies, to act tyrannically. Barbers, for example, are in many parts of the country forbidden to add the art of shampooing to their ordinary craft, it having been determined by the union that to shampoo was beneath the dignity of the knights of the razor. During the last six days of the year, when the heads of the whole male portion of the empire are shaved, barbers are forbidden to clean the ears of their customers, as it is their wont to do during the rest of the months. Any one found breaking this rule is liable to be mobbed, and to have his tools and furniture thrown into the street.

By a long-established custom, barbers and the sons of barbers used to be reckoned among the pariah classes who were disqualified for competing in the competitive examinations. Though complaints of this deprivation had been long and loud, no formal action was taken in the matter until the union took up the question. In their collective capacity the members appealed to the governor of Chehkiang, who, approving of the spirit of the memorial, presented the matter to the emperor, and obtained for the barbers the removal of the disability. It is too much to expect that the unions

should always refrain from bringing to bear the influence which they collectively possess for their direct financial advancement. Strikes are of frequent occurrence, and victory is commonly with the workmen, except when their claims are manifestly unjust. The mandarins recognize that they cannot flog a whole trade, and the poverty of the men secures them against those exactions which would probably be demanded from their employers were they to appear in court. These facts are fully recognized by the masters, who prefer rather to yield to the demands of their men than to fall into the clutches of their rulers.

As in all primitive and uneducated states of society, the Chinese have a rooted objection to machinery of all kinds. Just as they now oppose steam navigation in the inland waters of the empire, so, until, quite lately, they rebelled against the importation of all labour-saving contrivances. Some years ago a Chinaman, imbued with Western ideas, landed at Canton a machine for sewing boots, and especially the leather soles worn by the natives. At this innovation the cobblers at once took alarm. They rose in their thousands and destroyed the new-fangled machine. In the same way the promoters of the first steam cotton-mills were compelled to submit to the destruction of machinery which, if it had been allowed to work would have given employment to many thousands of people.*

The contrast between the society constituted as above described, and that of this country, is at once

* "Chinese Guilds, or Chambers of Commerce and Trades Unions." By D. J. Macgowan, M.D. *Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xxi., 1886.

apparent. The absence of an hereditary aristocracy deprives the Chinese of a most useful and potent link between the crown and its subjects. We have learnt from our own history how great is the protection afforded to the nation by the presence of a body of powerful nobles who are strong enough to resist the encroachments of the sovereign and to moderate and guide the aspirations of the people. In China no such healthy influence is to be found, and the result is that there is a constant straining and creaking in the social machine, which has many a time ended in fierce outbreaks, and not infrequently in the overthrow of dynasties. It was remarked by a Chinese statesman, at the time of the T'aip'ing rebellion, that two hundred years was the normal length of a Chinese dynasty, and this bears substantial evidence to the want of some such mediating influences as an hereditary aristocracy and representative institutions are alone able to afford. The voice of the people finds no expression in any recognized form of representation. Politically they are atoms whose ultimate power of asserting their claims to justice lies only in the sacred right of rebellion.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEDICINE.

It may be asked in surprise why no mention has been made of the professional classes—the doctors, the lawyers, and others; and the answer may be returned in the words of the celebrated chapter on the snakes in Iceland, "There are none." That is to say, there are none in the sense to which we are accustomed. There are plenty of doctors, but they can only be described as belonging to a professional class in the sense in which itinerant quacks, who profess to cure all the ills which flesh is heir to by bread pills, can lay claim to that distinction. They are the merest empirics, and, having no fear of medical colleges or examination tests before their eyes, prey on the folly and ignorance of the people without let or hindrance. The physicians who are privileged to prescribe for the emperor are the only members of the profession to whom failure means disgrace. When the late emperor was attacked by small-pox, an improvement in his symptoms with which the doctor's skill was credited, brought a shower of distinctions on the fortunate physicians. Unhappily for them, however, the disease took a fatal turn, and when his imperial majesty "ascended on a dragon to be a

guest on high," the lately promoted doctors were degraded from their high estate, and were stripped of every title to honour.

Such of the drugs in common use as have any curative properties are derived from herbs, while the rest are probably useless when not absolutely harmful. No Harvey has yet risen to teach the Chinese the laws of the circulation of the blood, nor has the study of anatomy disclosed to them the secrets of the human frame. Amputation is never resorted to, it being a part of the creed of the people that any mutilation of the body is an act of disrespect to the parents from whom it was received; and cases have constantly occurred where mandarins, who have met with violent accidents, and who have been assured by foreign doctors that amputation alone could save their lives, have deliberately chosen to go to their graves rather than to lose a limb. On the same principle, a criminal condemned to die considers himself fortunate if he is allowed to make his exit by strangulation or the hangman's cord rather than by decapitation.

Between the ignorance of the doctors and the fees they receive, there is a just ratio. No physician, in his wildest moments of ambition, expects to receive more than a dollar for a visit, and many are not paid more than a fifth of that sum. But, whatever the amount may be, due care is taken to wrap the silver in ornamental paper bearing the inscription "golden thanks." On entering the presence of his patient the doctor's first act is to feel the pulses on both wrists. Not only are they entirely ignorant of the difference between arteries and veins, but they believe that the pulses of the wrists

communicate with, and indicate the condition of, the different organs of the body. By the beating of the pulse of the left arm they profess to read the state of the heart, while that on the right represents the health of the lungs and liver. If these guides are deemed insufficient to make patent the disorder under which the patient is suffering, recourse is had to the tongue, which is supposed to yield a sure augury of the nature of the malady. Their great object is, as they say, "to strengthen the breath, put down the phlegm, equalize and warm the blood, repress the humours, purge the liver, remove noxious matters, improve the appetite, stimulate the gate of life, and restore harmony." A dual system of heat and cold pervades, they believe, the human frame, and it is when one of these constituents is in excess that illness supervenes. The Chinese delight in numerical categories, and they profess to find in the five elements of which they believe a man's body to be composed, an intimate relation to the five planets, the five tastes, the five colours, and the five metals.

"The heart," they say, "is the husband, and the lungs are the wife," and if these two main organs cannot be brought to act in harmony, evil at once arises. In the native pharmacopœia there are enumerated four hundred and forty-two principal medicines as being in common use. Of these three hundred and fourteen are derived from vegetable products, fifty from minerals, and seventy-eight from animal substances. Among the monstrous tonics prescribed by the Galens of China, are asbestos, stalactite, fresh tops of stag-horns, dried red spotted lizard-skins, dog-flesh, human milk, tortoise-shell,

bones and teeth of dragons, shavings of rhinoceros-horns, and other possible and impossible nostrums. Two thousand years B.C. the Emperor Hwangti wrote, it is said, a work on the healing art. In the centuries which have elapsed since that time little advance has been made in the science, the principal exceptions being a knowledge of acupuncture and of vaccination. It is uncertain when acupuncture was first practised in China, but the faith of the people in its efficacy for all cases of rheumatic affections and for dyspepsia is unbounded. So soon as the physician has made up his mind that a particular bone or muscle is in a state of inflammation, he thrusts a substantial steel needle into the part affected, and stirs it ruthlessly about. Happily for the patients, their race is heir to a lymphatic temperament which preserves it from many of the evils which would certainly arise from such treatment among a more inflammatory people. The treatment for dyspepsia is even more calculated to produce danger and disorders than that applied to the joints and bones. A Chinese doctor does not hesitate to thrust the needle into a patient's stomach or liver, and the system of blistering wounds thus caused adds considerably to the danger surrounding the operation.

For many years the Chinese have employed inoculation as a preventive against small-pox, but it was not till the arrival at Canton of Dr. Pearson, in 1820, that the knowledge of vaccination was introduced into the empire. A pamphlet on the subject, translated into Chinese by Sir George Staunton, spread the knowledge of the art far and wide, and though by no means universally used,

it still allays to some degree the terrible scourge of small-pox which is ever present in China. It is seldom that a child escapes from an attack of the disease, and the percentage of deaths is always considerable. In the north of the country, it has been observed that the disease becomes epidemic every winter. The reason for this regular recurrence of the malady is probably to be found in the fact that the infection clings to the fur clothes worn by the people, which are, as a rule, sent to the pawnshops on the return of every spring, and are only brought out again on the approach of winter. Throughout all the central and southern provinces leprosy is endemic. In the province of Canton it is reckoned that there are ten thousand people afflicted with this terrible malady. Though it is not regarded as infectious, contagion is avoided; and outside most of the large cities there are leper villages, where the victims to the disease are supposed to segregate. The law on this subject is not, however, strictly enforced, and in the streets of such cities as Canton, for example, beggars suffering from the disease appeal for alms to the passers-by by exposing their swollen and decaying limbs to their gaze. Many are the strange remedies resorted to for cures in the first stages of the malady, but so soon as the disease is fully developed, the wretched sufferers resign themselves to their fate. It is recognized among the natives, as has been found to be the case elsewhere, that it is only by constant association with a leper that there is danger of infection, and that cleanliness is as potent a protection against the disease, as damp climates and unhealthy food are promoters of it.

Epidemics of cholera and diphtheria sweep periodically over the land, and the people are powerless to allay their progress or to diminish their intensity. Though they have succeeded in reaching that stage in which disease is recognized as a departure from the usual and harmonious working of the organism, they have yet never learnt, in the words of Harvey, "to search and study out the secrets of nature by way of experiment." In the presence of cholera, instead of taking any medical precautions, they have recourse to charms, to the worship of their gods, and, as a religious exercise, to the practice of vegetarianism. Being deprived, therefore, of every rational weapon with which to combat the malady, one would be inclined to expect that the disease would be endemic, instead of only epidemic. If the theory of infection is without qualification true, and if no precautions whatever are taken to prevent the spread of the disease, it would be only natural to suppose that the areas of infection would increase and multiply. No care is taken to isolate the patients; no such safeguard is invoked as the destruction of the clothes of the victims, whose dead bodies are frequently allowed to remain encoffined in the dwellings of the survivors. And yet the outbreak disappears almost as suddenly as it came, leaving no trace behind it except in the sad memories of those who mourn the loss of relatives and friends. The natives believe that the outbreaks are the results of atmospheric conditions, and they assert that they have seen the evil approach in the shape of clouds, which have swept over provinces, leaving disease and death in their train. Some colour is given to

this theory by the fact, as already stated, that the disease comes and goes without any apparent cause, and certainly not as a result of any unusual sanitary or unsanitary conditions.

Much the same may be said of the outbreaks of diphtheria, which constantly prove so fatal in the north of the country. In a recent epidemic in Peking, it was stated by a resident English doctor that in a household of twenty-six persons, twenty-four were carried off by this fatal disease. Indeed, the whole history of epidemics in China seems to suggest that we have not yet arrived at the true solution either of the origin of the outbreaks or of the cause of their cessation.

As in most Eastern countries, the cities and villages of China swarm with mangy and half-starved curs of all degrees. Ill fed, uncared for, these scavengers range through the streets and lanes, picking up a precarious livelihood from the refuse which is thrown out as unfit for the food of either man or beast. If we add to these conditions that the climate over the greater part of the empire is almost tropical in its heat, and that the water available to slake the thirst of the dogs is none of the purest, it will be admitted that no surrounding is wanting to promote and encourage outbreaks of hydrophobia. It is a remarkable fact, however, that, though the disease exists, it is not more prevalent than it is. Chinese doctors recognize it, and their medical works treat of it, describing both the symptoms and the remedies for its cure. One well-known authority gives the following prescription as a sure and unfailing treatment for the victims of the malady: "Take the curd of the black pea

dried and pulverized, mix it with hemp oil, and form it into a large ball; roll this over the wound for some time, then break it open, and the inside will present a hair-like appearance. Continue the rolling until, on breaking it open, it is found to have lost the hair-like aspect. The patient must avoid eating dog-flesh or silkworms, and he must not drink wine or inhale the fragrance from hemp for a hundred days. Neither may he eat with safety diseased meat or anything in a state of decomposition. . . . He must daily partake of plum kernels. When the poison of the dog has entered the heart of the victim, and has produced feelings of misery and wretchedness, the stomach swells, and there is an abundant secretion of saliva; it is then proper to try the effect of the skull, teeth, and toes of a tiger ground up, and given in wine in doses of one fifth of an ounce. If a speedy cure does not follow, the person becomes mad, and barks like a dog. The eyes become white and glaring, and death quickly ensues." These remedies are of a kind that are used in many of the other diseases which afflict Chinese humanity, and are equally efficacious.

Tumours are very common amongst the Chinese, and as the use of the knife is practically forbidden, the sufferers fail to get that relief which a knowledge of practical surgery would, in a great majority of cases, readily procure for them.

With a knowledge so imperfect, and a profound ignorance of physical science, it is not surprising that the Chinese should be firm believers in the magical arts. Second sight, miraculous interpositions, and supernatural appearances are commonplaces in their systems of belief. Not only in the

novels and story-books which delight the people, but in the more serious works of philosophers and students, we find constant references to these occult phenomena. Messages from the land of spirits are delivered by means of the planchette, which is skilfully manipulated and interpreted by the cunning professors of the art; and the figures and features of individuals whom the gazers desire to see are produced in mirrors by the exercise of that ready imagination which belongs to the credulous. Fortune-telling by means of astrology is regarded as a genuine science, and the law protects those who practise it from the punishment which is prescribed for those charlatans who follow less established methods. From all time the philosopher's stone has been regarded as a verity, and it is confidently asserted that the Taoist philosophers of antiquity were able by its means to achieve the conversion of dross into the precious metals. History tells us of emperors and statesmen who have exhausted their lives and treasures in attempting to discover this priceless stone, and the elixir of longevity. The inevitable failures in which the efforts of these men have ended, has doubtless convinced the more educated classes of the futility of the search. But, like all popular superstitions, this one dies hard among the ignorant population, and there are at the present day many thousands in China who confidently believe in the possibility of manufacturing gold, and of prolonging life indefinitely. A less baseless superstition is the faith of the people in the plant known as ginseng (*Panax ginseng*). The properties of this plant are said to be invigorating and life-giving. To the *roué* it gives strength, and

to the old man it gives vitality and power. So precious are these qualities, that the best plants are in theory reserved entirely for the emperor's use. A large proportion of the revenue of Corea is derived from the export duty levied on this plant, and one of the principal streets of Peking is devoted to the sale of it. "The plant grows from twelve to eighteen inches in height, with five long leaves on each stalk like a horse-chestnut. In spring it bears a cluster of purple flowers on the top of the stem, replaced in summer-time by bright red berries, which the searchers for the root look out for. . . . Only emperors and millionaires can afford the genuine article, for a root four or five inches long realizes perhaps ten pounds." * Extravagant as this figure may seem, it is a moderate computation, and not infrequently a thousand taels of silver are paid for a pound's weight of the root. The plant is grown in Manchuria as well as in Corea, and the returns for 1890 state that the export duty from Manchuria into China realized in that year four hundred and fifty thousand taels. This sum does not, however, by any means represent the amount of the plant exported. Its rare value, the small compass in which it can be carried, the greed of the peasants, and the corruption rife amongst the customs officials, all tend to encourage smuggling. That an illicit trade in the root is commonly carried on is fully recognized by the Government, who have enacted that any one found attempting to smuggle more than ten taels weight of the medicine is to be forwarded to the Board of Punishments at Peking, and that, in case of a less amount being in

* "The Long White Mountain," by H. E. M. James, p. 272.

question, the case may be dealt with by local authorities.

In legal affairs the people are even worse off than in the matter of medical advice. They have no one to give them, for love or money, even as much help as is to be got for the body at the apothecaries' stalls. The only legal advisers are those clerks and secretaries who guide the mandarins by the light of the penal code to a right judgment in all matters entailing a knowledge of law. Like magistrates' clerks among ourselves, they are carefully trained in legal practice, and were they but free from the itching palm which distinguishes the official classes, they would be a most useful section of the community. Having a tabulated code to which they are bound by law to conform, less knowledge and ingenuity are required to equip them for their profession than is the case with English barristers, whose manifest duty it is to assist the judges in making law while engaged in the administration of it. The absence of public opinion, also, shelters them from criticism, and leaves them practically a free hand, mitigated only by the fear of a possibly inquisitive censor, to work their will either for good or ill among the people.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS.

It may be argued that the permanance of the empire goes to show that the absence of an hereditary aristocracy and of the professional classes has not proved detrimental to its existence. As has been already remarked, the vitality of the political constitution and the social institutions of China is the most remarkable features in the history of the country. For forty centuries the empire has stood, resisting both disintegrating influences from within and the attack of foes from without. While all the great empires of antiquity — Babylonian, Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman—have flourished and decayed, China alone has gained force and power, and now, rich with the spoils of time, stands firmer and more enduring than at any period during the long course of her history. Many writers have sought to solve the secret of this vitality. It has been the opinion of some that the marked observance of the principles of filial piety among the Chinese has secured to the nation the fulfilment of the promise held out in the Decalogue to those who honour their parents. Some have considered that the system of placing the government in the hands of those men who have proved themselves at the

examination halls to be the possessors of talent, is the prime cause of the longevity of the empire. Others regard the geographical position of the country, cut off as it is from the rest of the world by wind-swept deserts and mountain ranges, as sufficient to account for its permanence; while some see in the written characters of the language, which being hieroglyphic and ideographic and non-alphabetical, have preserved a certain standard of expression amid varying dialects and linguistic changes, a medium which has produced a unity of thought and feeling, and which has thus exercised a potent influence in sustaining a common nationality.

No doubt there is much to be said for all these views. One and all have unquestionably helped to perpetuate the empire, but there is some weight also to be given to the idiosyncrasies of race, and to the deeper principles which guide the motives of a nation. Among the several peoples related by racial ties with the Chinese we see, and have seen, the same well-marked love of precedent, adherence to custom, and admiration for antiquity, which are so characteristic of the Celestials. The historical relics left us by the Accadians show us that these traits were prominent features in the disposition of those early people of Mesopotamia, while the Dravidian nations of southern India, the nomad dwellers in the vast plains of Mongolia, and the inhabitants of Manchuria display a like overweening attachment to the same objects of regard. But, as was remarked by the late Mr. Andrew Wilson, in the introductory chapter to his work on the "Ever-victorious Army," the principle upon which the structure of Chinese society is built up, is one which

has done more to crystallize the life of the nation than anything else. This principle he defines as the recognition of "a divine harmony in the universe, which affects all existing objects, and to which the souls of men are naturally attuned." When this harmony exists, and the three persons of the trinity, heaven, earth, and man, are as one, the empire is peace, and the people enjoy the blessings of prosperity. The chief crown of glory, which posterity has placed on the brows of the ancient sovereigns and the sages of antiquity, is that by their godlike wisdom they harmonized the people and brought them into direct accord with the decrees of heaven. In a well-known passage in one of the earliest classics the Emperor Yao charged his successor Shun (B.C. 2258) in these words, "Let the elements of water, fire, metal, wood, and earth, with grain, be well regulated; adjust the domestic virtues, increase useful commodities, promote human existence, and cause harmony to prevail. Let these nine things be well adjusted, and, being adjusted, let them be set to music,;" and thus, he implied, let them express in melody the harmony which he desired to see existing.

The united voice of all the great teachers which the Chinese have been taught to obey, have joined in impressing on the people the importance of preserving this harmony in all the relations of life—whether as ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother, or friend and friend. Generation after generation it has been borne in upon them that this principle, which "embalms the wisdom and reflects the sagacity of ages," is the true one to follow. It was the burden

of the lessons taught by the ancestors of the race, it was the message delivered by Confucius, and it has been handed down as a sacred legacy by all succeeding authorities, who, one and all, have proclaimed the doctrine that by it alone is the emperor brought into a true and lively accord with his subjects, and the people taught, willingly and naturally, to submit to the will of their ruler.

This principle of harmony is brought prominently before the people by means of the established competitive examinations. It is the subject of study which absorbs the best years in the life of the many thousands who annually present themselves before the examiners; and by education and training it has become part of the life of the nation. It is unnecessary now to inquire when the system of examination, which is one of the distinctive features of Chinese political life, was first instituted. It concerns us nearer to ask what are the subjects by which the candidates' knowledge and capacity are tested. In one sense they are lamentably narrow, and consist only of the early dynastic histories of the empire and the nine classics; namely, "The Conversations of Confucius," in which the sayings of the sage are collected somewhat in the style of the gospel narratives; "The Great Learning;" and "The Doctrine of the Mean," which embody the teachings of Confucius; "Mencius," which contains the utterances of that sage, and which is compiled after the manner of the "Conversations of Confucius;" "The Book of Changes"—the oldest book of the Chinese—which is commonly understood by the Chinese to be a book on divination, but which is a work chiefly arranged after the manner of the

ancient Accadian syllabaries ; "The Book of Odes," consisting of a collection of the ancient popular ballads of the people ; "The Book of History," which took its shape about the time of Confucius, and which is said to have been edited by him ; "The Spring and Autumn Annals"—a history by Confucius of his native state of Lu, extending over two hundred and forty-two years ; and "The Book of Rites," which is said to have been compiled in about the twelfth century before Christ, and which is still the ultimate court of appeal in all questions of doubtful ceremonial at the present day.

The texts of these works are not voluminous, and consist, so far as the nine classics are concerned, of only seven slim octavo volumes. But the labours of commentators have extended the contents of the works to inordinate dimensions. Students of Hebrew literature are well acquainted with folio volumes, in which the text of the Talmud occupies on each page a trifling central position, and is surrounded on all sides with an intolerable deal of commentary. This is much the condition of the Chinese classics. Century after century have produced scholars who have devoted their lives to the production of exegetical treatises, which, since every grain of wheat has been long since well thrashed out of the texts, have degenerated into trivial criticisms and verbal technicalities. The principal works of these authorities are added to the labours of the student, so that, in addition to the modest shelf-ful of volumes containing the texts, he has to make himself acquainted with a whole library of commentaries.

The entire education of the youth of China—

girls are only occasionally and superficially taught anything beyond their household duties—leads up to the study of this literature. School life commonly begins at the age of six, and the youthful learner is at once set to learn by heart easy text-books which give in short sentences the leading principles of Chinese polity. The language not being alphabetical, the student is compelled to learn to read by rote as well as to remember by heart. Having mastered these text-books so that he can repeat them throughout without a mistake, he goes on to the classics, and the rest of his student life is devoted to applying the same system to them that he has pursued with regard to his earlier tasks. The memory becomes in this way abnormally developed, and is trained at the expense of all the higher mental faculties. It is always easier to remember than to think, and, according to the current Chinese system, it is also more profitable. As has been already explained, the liberal professions do not exist in China, and a youth, in determining his calling in life, has to choose between becoming a scholar and a possible mandarin, and taking to trade. This narrowing of future possibilities induces almost every lad who possesses any talent whatever to throw in his lot with the students. And this point being decided, he devotes himself with all the industry of his race to preparing for the public examinations, by perfecting his knowledge of the classics, and by practising the art of writing essays and penning verses. So soon as he considers that he is master of his fate, he presents himself, in the company of hundreds of others, before the magistrate of the district, who on the

appointed day gives out three passages from the classics, on which the students are expected to write two essays and a poem. The names of those students who are successful at this preliminary trial are published in a notice at the gate of the magistrate's yamun; and they are then entitled to appear again before the same examiner, who on each of five successive days expects them to write an essay and a poem on themes taken from the same sources. Again a list of the successful candidates is published, and those whose names appear on the placard are invited by the magistrate to a congratulatory feast. The next scene opens in the prefectural city of the department, when those who have sat at the magistrate's table appear before the prefect and literary chancellor, who demand from them much the same kind of work as they have just gone through. On the survivors from these several ordeals is conferred the degree of Siuts'ai, or "elegant scholar," which may be said to be the equivalent of our degree of Bachelor of Arts. Having donned the academicals proper to this degree—a robe of blue silk bordered with black, and bound round the waist with a girdle ornamented with silver pendants, and surmounted with a silver-buttoned cap, topped with silver braid—the newly-created graduates go in a body to their latest judge, before whom, at a word of command, they perform the *kot'ow* three times. To the prefect they subsequently offer the same homage, and then disperse to their homes to receive the congratulations and excite the admiration of their friends.

This, however, is but the beginning of their

literary troubles. Every third year an examination is held in the provincial capital, which is presided over by a commissioner specially appointed by the emperor. This office is eagerly coveted, on account both of the distinction it confers and of the emoluments attaching to it. From the time that the commissioner leaves Peking until his return, his travelling and lodging expenses of every kind are provided by the local authorities through whose districts he passes on his way. At the provincial capital he is lodged in a spacious yamun, and fares sumptuously every day. On leaving the city he is presented with a handsome sum of money by the authorities, and subsequently receives from each of the two or three hundred successful graduates a presentation offering of twenty taels, or about five pounds. During the night preceding the examination, or very early on the morning of the day, the graduates, who generally number from six to eight thousand, enter the examination hall, and take possession of the cells set apart for them, each of which bears a number corresponding to that on the roll of examination paper given to each candidate. The cells are built in rows, and are about four feet wide, five and a half feet deep, and about six feet high. They have neither doors nor windows, and the furniture of each consists only of three or four pieces of wide board, with trestles, which serve as bench and table during the day and as a bedstead by night. Each competitor brings with him food for two days, and on entering is vigorously searched to see that he has no "cribs" about him. So soon as all are assembled, the doors are locked and sealed, and the examiner,

having vowed before Heaven that he will act justly and without fear or favour, the work begins by the issuing to each student of four texts from the classics, upon which he is expected to write three essays and a poem. Two days are given for the completion of these tasks, and at the end of that time the doors are thrown open, and those who have finished their work pass out under a salute of three guns and the beating of drums. Those who are not ready are allowed a few hours' additional time. Two similar ordeals, at a day's interval between each, have further to be undergone, and degrees are then conferred on the best candidates to the number laid down by law. These fortunate Chüjên, or "promoted men," celebrate their triumph, on the governor's invitation, at a feast known as the "Belling of the Deer," from the fact that an ancient ode bearing that title is chanted at the board. In the following spring it becomes the duty of the much-examined candidates to repair to Peking, where, under the auspices of a minister of state, an imperial prince, and three other examiners, they are further examined for the degree of Tsinshih, or "advanced scholar." The competitors at this ordeal commonly number about six thousand, out of which number only about five per cent. obtain the coveted honour. A further examination of the pick of these men, held by the emperor in person, ends in the selection of four scholars, to whom are given the titles of Chwang-yüan, Pangyen, T'anhwa, and Chw'anlu, respectively, and who may be considered as occupying the relative positions of senior wrangler and of the three next in order to him.

Such is the outline of the system by which the Government attempts to select the ablest men in the empire for the service of the state, and no doubt to a certain extent it succeeds. The examinations unquestionably supply a test of the industry of the successful graduates, as well as of their capacious memories and powers of composition. They, however, afford no guarantee of the character of the competitors, nor do the results suggest in any way their capacity or incapacity for administration. It is true that the sons of actors, executioners, jailors, and outcasts are prohibited from competing; but, with these exceptions, the lists are open to everybody, and the veriest booby in the affairs of the world may win the highest distinction, if only he can write prose and compose verses after the stereotyped models held up for his admiration.

From the large number of successful candidates for the different degrees it is obvious that even in such a huge empire as China offices cannot be found for even a tithe of them. Few Siuts'ais gain employment, and even numbers of Tsinshih are obliged to be content with expectant posts, which become substantive only as vacancies occur and Fortune befriends them.

In such a system, administered on Oriental methods, it needs must be that offences come. The examiners are not always immaculate, and native satirists are never tired of pointing to the ease with which relatives of the appointed judges and wealthy candidates rise in the literary hierarchy. Occasionally some censor exposes these honours from corruption, and if the inculpated examiner does not

happen to stand high in court favour, the probability is that he is summarily compelled to retire from the service for a time. But nepotism and bribery form only a small part of the weapons of deception used by candidates. The principle upon which a larger proportion act is simple and direct. In the words of Pope it is—

> "Get place and wealth; if possible, with grace;
> If not, by any means get wealth and place."

The purlieus of the examination halls are infested by a race of rakish scholars, who are prepared to act as substitutes for incompetent students, or to smuggle in essays on the themes propounded. At a recent examination at Peking forty-four of these men were discovered playing borrowed parts, and doubtless many more passed through the ordeal without being found out. In a memorial recently presented to the throne the literary chancellor of the province of Kwangtung exposes "the abuses which he has found prevailing in the examination system in that province, where the practice of employing substitutes to pass in the stead of the actual candidates for degrees is extremely frequent, as also the abuse of smuggling essays into the competitors' cells. He had," he says, "caused the arrest of twenty persons acting as substitutes at the recent primary examinations, whom he had handed over to the proctor to be punished according to law." That this province is not alone in its iniquity is proved by the numbers of memorials describing the system prevailing of supplying candidates with essays ready written, or furnishing rough drafts to be copied by the candidates them-

selves. And we have it on the word of a censor, that "the amount of corruption that exists in the examination system of Szech'uan surpasses that of any other province in the empire."

The law provides that every candidate who presents himself for examination should hand in to the local authority a full and minute description of his personal appearance. If this were invariably done, and if the men, as they entered the examination hall, were identified by a comparison of their features with their recorded descriptions, the crime of personating candidates might be checked. But, like every other part of the Chinese administration, the examination system is honeycombed with corruption, and is often disordered by open violence. One censor reports to the throne that everywhere personation and cheating are rife; that examiners are guilty of extortion; and that candidates most improperly crowd together and exchange essays and information. At an examination in the capital some years since, we learn from the *Peking Gazette*, "that when the graduates were assembled within the imperial precincts for the palace competition, and before the preliminary ceremony of prostrations was completed, they sprang to their feet in wild confusion and began to scramble for the blank essay forms. The secretary of the Board of Ceremonies, who was in attendance, in endeavouring to quell the riotous proceeding and to keep possession of the papers, had the back of his hands lacerated by the finger-nails of the contending graduates. Such want of reverence as this for the imperial halls," adds the *Gazette*, "has surely never before been displayed by the lettered class."

One would have expected that those learned Chinamen, who desired "to pluck the mystic Cassia and to tread the azure clouds," would have been more sedate and orderly, more especially when within the yellow-tiled walls of the imperial precincts. But Peking has a bad reputation in this respect. And not only do the candidates themselves outrage all sense of propriety, but their friends, in their anxiety to gain the first news of the results of the examinations, defy authority, and even break into the arcane inclosure preserved for the competitors.

On a recent occasion a body of fervid relatives broke down the wooden railing in front of the examination hall, scaled the walls of the sacred building, and dropped down into the rooms of the officials, where, in the words of the *Gazette*, "they shouted and yelled till the very earth trembled with the noise they made." But violence, as the candidates well know, is not likely to gain them favour in the eyes of the examiners, and many and ingenious are the tricks by which they attempt to secure admission to the coveted rank of graduates. In some districts candidates intending to enter for the primary examination form themselves into verse-making societies, and invite the mandarins who are likely to be their examiners to criticise their effusions. By this means they often succeed in currying favour with the officials, and at all events in making them acquainted with their handwriting. This is again a point on which great laxity prevails. Every essay, before being presented to the examiner, should, by rights, be transcribed by copyists, who are thus supposed to obliterate entirely all recognizable traces of any individual

student. But not only is this rule commonly violated, but even when carried out the opportunity which it affords the copyists of amending the compositions of their friends is frequently taken advantage of. One case of this kind was lately brought to the notice of the throne, and an inquiry was ordered, which ended, as most inquiries of the kind do—at least in China. Neither the candidate nor the copyist was found guilty of the main offence, but the copyist was dismissed from the service for having "carelessly" substituted one character for another! As has already been said, the themes set are taken from the classical works; and the essays are arranged on strictly hard-and-fast lines. The candidate is expected to divide his essay into nine sections: (1) the theme; (2) analysis of the theme; (3) amplification of the theme; (4) explanation; (5) post explanation; (6) argument, first division; (7) reassertion of theme; (8) argument, second division; (9) argument, third division. The following is a specimen of a successful essay formed in accordance with these regulations.

"*Theme.*—Tzŭ-Kung said to Confucius: 'Suppose there were a man of such unbounded beneficence and power that he was able to extend help to every one of the people (who needed it), what would you say of him? Might he be called humane?' Confucius answered: 'Is humane the right word? Must he not be a holy man?'

"*Analysis of the Theme.*—The meaning of the above words is that a humane man, as such merely, would not be able to reach the degree of unbounded beneficence and power supposed by Tzŭ-Kung.

"*Amplification of Theme.*—That is to say, that

such unbounded beneficence and power could be manifested by none but a holy man; and it is this that Confucius conveys in his answer to Tzŭ-Kung's doubting question, 'Might he be called humane?'

"*Explanation.*—For the term humane is applied to a man who has reached the full standard of that which humanity requires; but if too high a meaning be given to that term, the true standard of humanity may perhaps be passed by the man to whom it is applied. But Tzŭ-Kung's question was prompted by his fervent wish that the full possibility of his nature reached, even the humane man might be able to bring down the blessings of peace and prosperity on his generation. While Confucius in his reply raised Tzŭ-Kung's estimate of the nature of a man who should be capable of the unbounded beneficence stated, pointing out that for such great power and wide beneficence we must look to the few holy men of antiquity—(Yao, Shun, etc.). Tzŭ-Kung would make the attainment of humanity impossible, thinking that if his sympathies should be broad enough to take in all men and things, then and not till then would he reach the possible development of humanity; but he forgot the achievements and virtues the record of which has come down to us from early times, and the distance that separates ordinary men from those highly endowed natures (Yao, Shun, etc.).

"*Post Explanation.*—His sacred majesty, the present head of the state, is the protection of his people, and has the interest of all at heart. But it must be a golden age, such that not a man suffers want, before the unbounded beneficence and power supposed by Tzŭ-Kung can be predicated of the

ruler. Can a humane man reach this standard? Tzŭ-Kung's statement was indeed a strange one.

"*Argument, First Division.*—Every man and woman below the sky, to whom heaven has given body and soul, should have my sympathy in his joy or sorrow; but if you say that not one individual must suffer because I have not been able to reach him with help, before I can fulfil the whole measure of humanity, I reply that humanity is not so distant as this.

"2. If in reality I am compassionate and at peace with my fellows, my sympathy will extend to all places and persons; but if you say that my bounty must reach every place on which the sun and moon shine, before I can attain the limit of which humanity is capable, I reply that humanity is not so difficult.

"*Reassertion of Theme.*—Suppose, then, there were a man of such unbounded beneficence and power that he was able to extend help to every one of the people (who needed it), what kind of man would he be? and what kind of work that on which he was engaged? When Tzŭ-Kung was in doubt whether such a man reached the standard of humanity, how greatly did he over-estimate that standard, and under-estimate the qualities necessary to unbounded beneficence!

"*Argument, Second Division.*—1. Tzŭ-Kung, when he put this question, no doubt knew that work of such extent and such difficulty was certainly not to be lightly accomplished, and he therefore allowed his imagination to wander and to represent to his mind's eye a man possessed of boundless beneficence and virtue—a man whose work might

perhaps be able to satisfy his own sincere love for the whole human race.

"2. But to Confucius' unerring judgment, a state of things in which all men under the heaven should be as one family, and the whole nation be of one mind, was scarcely to be hoped for, and therefore he could not restrain himself from looking afar and aloft (to the days of Yao, Shun, etc.)—for such great virtue and spiritual power certainly belonged only to the first emperors, whom Heaven specially endowed.

"*Argument, Third Division.*—Thus it was that Confucius replied without hesitation. How can you expect this from humanity? Can humanity reach this standard? Is the world so full of virtuous men, and so united in opinion? Nature loves and hides the spirit that will make a good and great man, and often many hundred years elapse between one manifestation and the next, so that when such a man is born, he may be at once recognized as of extraordinary capacity; and thus the birth of a holy or enlightened man certainly cannot be depended on. But why should we not, however unlikely its realization may be, indulge the thought that the appearance of such a man is possible? Work of unusual difficulty must await the birth of a man whose mind is *en rapport* with heaven and earth (or who is able to assist nature in her processes, and to form a co-equal Trinity with heaven and earth, see 'Chung-Yung,' ch. xxii.). From the earliest times unusually arduous undertakings have had to await the appearance of specially endowed rulers (lit. emperors who by their rule brought about such a state of equilibrium and harmony that a happy

order prevailed throughout heaven and earth, and all things were nourished, see 'Chung-Yung,' 1. 5, Legge I. page 248). And when a period of calamity is reached, unless such a man is forthcoming, the people cannot be saved. But the humane may have the desire to perform this work, and if he succeed so far that men look up to him with hope, who can help going back in imagination (to the days of Yao and Shun)?

"2. Are the people always in the enjoyment of peace and plenty? And when a period of bad fortune does come round, the lives and property of the multitude await the delivering arm of an able ruler. But how can we be sure that a holy man will come suddenly forth to the rescue? Yet what harm can there be in forming a wish, however improbable its realization, that such a being may appear? A time when all men shall enjoy plenty and happiness can only come about when one of those periods, predestined to be adorned by wise men and their illustrious deeds, has come round. A ruler who proposes to himself as his object the happiness of his people, must be a man of the highest principle and in sympathy with Nature. When the work of saving a starving or drowning people is in question, none but such a man can be equal to the task. But the humane man can greatly assist in this work. Good fortune cannot make a man equal to such great undertakings; and (when we think of our need of such a man) who does not go back in imagination (to the days of Yao and Shun)?

"Confucius answered, 'Is humane the right word? Must he not be a holy man?'"*

* *The China Review*, vol. viii. No. 6.

Besides the essays on texts from the classics, candidates are expected to show their acquaintance with history, and the writings of the commentators thereon, by answering, in the form of theses, questions put on the subject. In an examination held at Wuch'ang, some years ago, at which between eight thousand and nine thousand candidates competed, such questions as the following were put to them for elucidation. "Chao Ch'ungkuo, when the north-west barbarians revolted at Hsienling, wished to cease employing his cavalry at Chinch'eng, and set up a colony there to shut in and incommode the barbarians, whereupon he wrote a memorial to the emperor, enumerating twelve advantages which would arise therefrom. Can you state in full these advantages, and their order?" And again, "At the time of the Emperor Shun (A.D. 126–144) the western barbarians were attacked and brought back to their allegiance. One Hü Hsu then asked to be allowed to establish three prefectures. For the purposes of this colony an aqueduct was made, and the ditches were deepened. What places in modern times occupy the sites of these prefectures?" *

Occasionally, but very occasionally, mathematical questions are introduced into the examination papers; but nothing in the shape of any knowledge outside that contained in the literature of the country is by any chance required of the candidates.

The examination of military candidates is formed on quite a different model. The only literary effort which they are expected to accomplish is to write from memory some portions of the

* *The China Review*, vol. ii. No. 6.

military classic, and even this is not very carefully scanned. Horse and foot archery are the principal tests applied to them. The mounted archer shoots six arrows at a target while at full gallop, and, to satisfy the examiners, three must find their billet. The foot archer also shoots six arrows at a target five feet five inches high, by two feet five inches broad, placed at a distance of a hundred and eighty-two feet. If he fails to plant two of these arrows in the bull's-eye he is ruthlessly plucked. Besides these exercises the candidates are expected to draw strong bows, to brandish heavy swords, and to lift weighty stones. No one who cannot raise a stone weighing from two hundred to three hundred pounds, a foot from the ground, can hope for a commission. These conditions are so simple and straightforward that there would appear to be little opportunity for those frauds and deceptions which disgrace the civil examinations; but it occasionally happens that a weakly candidate secures the services of a strong man to perform on his behalf the necessary feats expected of him. One such man was lately discovered in a ruse of this kind. By chance, or possibly as the result of a suspicion that something was wrong, the examiner suddenly called upon the genuine candidate once again to draw the strong bow. The trial was too much for him, and his excuse that he had hurt his right arm proving insufficient, he was incontinently sent about his business.

CHAPTER X.

FILIAL PIETY AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN.

As has already been said, the strange continuity of the Chinese empire is, in the opinion of some, to be attributed to the respect with which the fifth commandment of the Decalogue is observed, and as this observance of filial piety is regarded as the fundamental virtue of social life, it is worthy of a few moments' attention. Being held in this supreme estimation, it is needless to say that Confucius laid great stress upon it. He deplored that he was not able to serve his father, being dead, as he expected his son to serve him, and he defined the virtue as consisting in not being disobedient, in serving the parent when alive according to propriety, when dead in burying him according to propriety, and in sacrificing to him according to propriety. The manner of performing this duty, like other Confucian instructions, is laid down with curious minuteness. At cock-crow it is the duty of the son or daughter, who should first be dressed with scrupulous care, to go to their parents' apartment to inquire after their welfare, and to attend to their wants, and he or she, more commonly she, must so continue at their beck and call until the night again closes upon them. These duties must not be performed in a

perfunctory way, but everything must be done with the expression of cheerfulness, and filial respect and love. "When his parents are in error," says the Book of Rites, "the son, with a humble spirit, pleasing countenance, and gentle tone, must point it out to them. If they do not receive his reproof he must strive more and more to be dutiful and respectful towards them until they are pleased, and then he must again point out their error. . . . And if the parents, irritated and displeased, chastise their son until the blood flows from him, even then he must not dare to harbour the least resentment; but, on the contrary, should treat them with increased respect and dutifulness." This kind of devotion to parents seems so strained and artificial that one would be tempted at first sight to imagine that it represents merely an ideal, were it not that the records of the past and the experiences of the present reveal the existence of a precisely similar *régime*. For many centuries the youth of both sexes—for though daughters do not partake of the privileges of sons, they share in all their duties—have had held up to them twenty-four instances of filial piety for their guidance and imitation. They are told, for instance, of a man named Lai, who, in order to make his parents forget their great age, being himself an elderly person, used to dress himself in parti-coloured embroidered garments like a child, and disport himself before them for their amusement. They are told of a lad whose parents were too poor to provide themselves with mosquito curtains, and who used to lie naked near their bed that the insects might attack him unrestrainedly, and thus cease to annoy his parents. They are told of

a poor man who, finding it impossible to support both his mother and his child, proposed to his wife that they should bury the child alive, for, said he, "another child may be born to us, but a mother, once gone, will never return." His wife having consented, the man dug a hole of the depth of three cubits, when lo! he came upon a pot of gold, bearing the following inscription: "Heaven bestows this treasure on a dutiful son; the magistrate may not seize it, nor shall the neighbours take it from him." In this story we have an instance of Chinese filial piety *in excelsis*, and an illustration of the effect of the Confucian warning against a selfish attachment to wife and children. It is a commonplace of Chinese morality that one or all of these should readily be sacrificed in the interests of parents, and it is interesting to find that this man, who is said to have been saved by a miracle from committing murder, has been handed down through more than twenty centuries as a model of virtue. It is unnecessary to quote any more of the twenty-four instances, but it is instructive to glance at the state of things existing at the present day, as depicted in the *Peking Gazette*, where cases may be met with which are scarcely less *bizarre* than those already referred to.

It is not long since that the great Viceroy Li Hungchang besought the emperor that a memorial arch might be erected in honour of a man within his jurisdiction. This person had been, we are told, from his youth up a devoted student of the ancient odes from a knowledge of which he early imbibed the principles of filial piety. With devotion he waited upon his widowed mother during her life-

time, and when she died in 1863 he was prostrated with grief and misery. In his loving devotion he was quite unable to tear himself away from her tomb, by the side of which he took up his abode day and night for eight years, being protected from the sun by day and the dews by night by a shed which his neighbours erected over him as he lay on the ground. Since that time he has devoted himself to distributing medicine among the sick, and to reading the book of "Filial Piety" to his neighbours. Such filial piety should not, the viceroy thought, be left unnoticed, and he therefore suggested the erection of a memorial arch, which was graciously accorded.

But the strangest development of this virtue is the practice favoured by dutiful sons and daughters of cutting off pieces of their own flesh to make soup for their aged or indisposed parents. A notable example of this was reported to the throne some time ago by the same viceroy, who seems fortunate in the number of filial sons and daughters within his jurisdiction. This particular instance refers to a young lady, a Miss Wang, who from her earliest years "exhibited a decorous propriety of conduct coupled with a love of study." She was a diligent reader of Liu Hiang's "Lives of Virtuous Women," and the poems of Muh Lan. At the age of thirteen, when the first hint of her parents' desire to betroth her reached her ears, she retired to her room, and, with a pointed weapon, drew blood from her arm, with which she wrote a sentence announcing her intention to remain single in order that she might devote herself to the care of her parents. At the age of eighteen she again refused a proposed matrimonial

alliance; and when, in 1852, the remains of her father and her second brother, who had perished at the capture of Wuch'ang by the rebels, were brought back to Kaoyeo, she exclaimed, with tears, that since she could not leave her mother to follow her father to the grave, she would at least varnish his coffin with her blood. Thereupon she gashed her arm with a knife, allowing a stream of blood to mingle with the lacquer of the coffin. She had reached the age of twenty-six when her father's obsequies were completed, and again her mother and elder brother urged her to marry, but she steadfastly declined, and devoted herself to waiting upon her mother, with whom she shortly afterwards removed to Choh Chow, on her brother receiving an appointment at Peking as a reward for his father's services. She allowed no hands but her own to wait upon her mother, and when, in 1862, her mother was attacked with a dangerous illness, she cut a piece of flesh from her left thigh to be administered as a remedy. In less than a year, a fresh attack of illness supervened, when she cut a piece of flesh from her right thigh, recovery ensuing as before. On subsequent occasions, when her parent was suffering from slight ailments, she applied burning incense sticks to her arms and used the calcined flesh to mingle with the remedies prescribed, and always with successful results.

After her mother's death, in 1872, she refused all sustenance during a period of three days, and was afterwards with difficulty persuaded to taste food. Her brother shortly afterwards died, whereupon she escorted his remains to the ancestral home at Kaoyeo, and afterwards returning thence per-

formed the same journey once more in attendance on her mother's coffin. "The devotion and energy she has displayed," adds the viceroy, "exceed what might be expected from one of the opposite sex, and it is solicited, in view of the wide repute which has been gained by her virtues at Choh Chow, that a monument may be erected in her honour under imperial sanction."*

The surprise expressed by the viceroy that a woman should be capable of ardent filial piety affords some indication of the esteem in which women are held in China. From their cradles to their graves they stand at a distinct disadvantage as compared with men. In the ancient book of odes mention is made of the custom of giving tiles to female infants for playthings, and sceptres to boys; and in the same way throughout their careers women are regarded as "moulded out of faults," and as being altogether unworthy of equal fellowship with men. Following in the footsteps of their ancient philosophers, Chinamen have learnt to regard women with disdain and, in ignorance of the good that is in them, to credit them with much that is evil. Some of the characters in which the language is written afford an apt illustration of this perverted idea. The character used to represent a woman (女) is a corruption of an Accadian hieroglyphic meaning the same thing. When we have two women together (奴) the compound is intended to convey the meaning of "to wrangle." The addition of a third woman (姦) makes a symbol for "intrigue," and in confirmation of the idea conveyed by these characters, we find the compound (嫌) composed of

* *Translation of Peking Gazette*, May 25, 1877.

"women" and "together" means "to suspect," "to dislike," "to loathe."

It was a saying reverenced among the Chinese that a woman should never be heard of outside her home, an idea which is still preserved in the symbol for "rest," "quiet" (安), which is a woman under her domestic roof. This ideograph is singularly appropriate in a country where women are in much the same untutored state as that enjoyed by Turkish ladies when Byron wrote—

> "No chemistry for them unfolds its gases;
> No metaphysics are let loose in lectures;
> No circulating library amasses
> Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures
> Upon the living manners as they pass us;
> No exhibition glares with annual pictures;
> They stare not on the stars from out their attics,
> Nor deal (thank God for that!) in mathematics."

No husband or male relative ever appears outside his own portal in company with his wife or female belongings, and social intercourse is thus entirely robbed of the softening influences and elevating tendencies which are everywhere due to the presence of women. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that women do not in many respects hold their own, even in the oppressive atmosphere of China; for there, as elsewhere, as Rosalind says in the play, "Make the doors upon a woman's wit, and it will out at the casement; shut that, and 'twill out at the keyhole; stop that, 'twill fly with the smoke out at the chimney." But their sphere of influence is confined to their own homes. If they have friends and acquaintances elsewhere, they are among the ladies in other households, to whom they pay visits in closed sedan-chairs—of course, this

has reference to the wealthy classes—and to whose dwellings they are admitted by the side doors. In the same half furtive manner they receive the return visits and entertain their friends in the "fragrant apartments," from which even the head of the household is rigidly excluded. What we call society is therefore confined to the men, who pay visits, give dinners, and enjoy picnics and excursions like people of all countries. The only dinner-parties, therefore, of which the outside world has any knowledge are those which lose to us half their attractions by being robbed of the presence of ladies, and which are rendered abnormally tedious by their great length.

> "'Tis merry in hall
> Where beards wag all,"

says the old ballad, and Chinamen seem to be of the same opinion. Before the guests are seated a long and protracted struggle ensues to induce the punctiliously modest guests to take the places assigned to them. When this formality is satisfactorily arranged, innumerable courses are served, with long intervals of waiting, which would be excessively wearying were they not enlivened either by theatricals or some game such as the Italian Morra (the Roman *micare digitis*), in which he who makes a mistake in the number of fingers shown pays forfeit by drinking three or more glasses of wine. If at the conclusion of the feast the guests are sober, which they very frequently are not, and if they are scholars the probability is that they settle down to writing quatrains of poetry on given subjects, when again the punishment for failure is the consumption of a certain quantity of wine. Like

the Japanese, Chinamen are ardent lovers of beautiful scenery, and delight in picnicing in favoured spots to admire the prodigality of Nature. Wherever mountains, lakes, or streams contrive to form attractive landscapes, there in the spring and summer seasons parties congregate and exchange ideas on everything under heaven except imperial politics. The etiquette observed at these gatherings is all laid down with scrupulous exactitude, and is rigidly adhered to. Even a morning call is surrounded with an amount of ceremony which to a European suggests infinite boredom. It is not considered proper for the visitor to walk to his friend's house, and, unless he be a military mandarin, when he commonly rides, he sallies out in his sedan-chair, followed by one or more servants, and armed with red visiting-cards about eight inches long and three wide, on which is inscribed his name, with sometimes the addition of the words, "Your stupid younger brother bows his head in salutation." On approaching his friend's house, a servant goes ahead with one of these cards and presents it at the door. If the host be out, the porter tells the servant "to stay the gentleman's approach," but if he should be at home the front doors are thrown open and the visitor is carried in his sedan into the courtyard, where the host attired in his robes of ceremony, greets him with many bows. Thence he is conducted to the central hall, where, after much friendly contention as to the seats they shall occupy, the guest finally and invariably is induced to take the place of honour on his host's left hand.

The practice universally followed of the speaker

applying adulatory terms towards his interlocutor and depreciatory ones towards himself, adds to the stilted formalities on such occasions. Everything connected with the person spoken to—his age, his neighbourhood, his name, his relations, etc.—are "honourable," "respected," "lofty," and "distinguished," while the speaker's are "contemptible" and "rude." His friend's house is a "palace," his is "a reed hut." But perhaps the strangest of these set phrases are the indirect terms by which one man addresses another. On receiving a visitor, a common expression is, "Is the honourable chariot well?" meaning, of course, the man who drives in the chariot, or "you." In the same way, the term "beneath the council-chamber," and "at the feet," are similarly used, implying a wish that those addressed may become Ministers of State, "the feet," of course, being those of the Son of Heaven. But, however much acquaintances may discuss subjects relating to themselves, no mention is ever made of their wives or daughters, who are as completely tabooed, except between very intimate friends, as though they did not exist.

This estrangement between the sexes is carried out in deed as well as in word. It is laid down on authority that in no case may a woman and a man touch each other in giving and receiving, and so literally was this command accepted, that it was held by many that it was even improper for a man to save a woman from drowning. A hypothetical case was put to Mencius on the subject: "If one's sister-in-law is drowning, ought she to be drawn out with the hand?" To which Mencius replied, "It is wolfish not to draw out a drowning sister-in-law."

And probably most people will agree with the philosopher. Even brothers and sisters, so soon as they have ceased to be children, are entirely separated, and are allowed intercourse only on formal conditions. Outside the family circle young men do occasionally, like Romeo, "with love's light wings o'er-perch the walls" of etiquette which surround the objects of their admiration, and we have abundance of evidence in native novels that communications are kept up between young ladies and stranger youths, but always with a most circumspect regard to the conventionalities. Prenuptial elopements occur but rarely, and the penalty which awaits the hasty pair in case of capture is imprisonment, which lasts as long as the vindictiveness of the parents determines. Commonly a maidservant acts as the Mercury between the lovers, and in one well-known novel the heroine nurses the hero in this vicarious way through a long illness, and eventually marries him out of regard for the scrupulous way in which he had confined himself to orthodox behaviour. In another romance the heroine, who, like most heroines in Chinese novels, was a Phœnix of learning and possessed of an exquisite poetic talent, tests the hero's capabilities by setting him themes on which he is expected to write pieces of poetry, but she declines to write the themes, on the ground that things written in the women's apartments should not be handed about to be seen of men. In such an artificial state of society dangers must arise, and the apprehension of it prompts mothers to desire to marry their daughters at as early an age as possible. It not unfrequently happens that, as in India, mere infants are betrothed,

and nothing but the death of either is considered sufficient to annul the bond. Even this event is not always accepted by the survivor, when the survivor is a girl, as a cancelling of the engagement. The *Peking Gazette* bears testimony to the occurrence of such cases, though it must be acknowledged that the flourish of trumpets with which they are announced to the throne suggests the idea that they form the exceptions rather than the rule. Personal feeling cannot enter into the consideration which prompts this action, for the probability is that the couple have never seen one another, and it can therefore only be out of regard for the letter of the law. A few years since a young lady was held up to admiration in a memorial to the throne for having starved herself to death on hearing of the decease of her betrothed, and cases are often officially reported in which the surviving young lady refuses positively to listen to any other marriage proposals. One maiden lately earned distinction by clasping her betrothed's memorial tablet to her arms and going through the marriage ceremony with it. It is quite possible, however, that the edge of these young ladies' adherence to the rules of propriety may be sharpened by an appreciation of the more than usually precarious lottery which marriage is in China. It is true that young men occasionally pay the same honour to the memory of their deceased *fiancées*, and are content to wed the shades of their mistresses ; but the same constancy is not expected of them, nor if it existed would be approved of by the censors of Chinese morals.

CHAPTER XI.

MARRIAGE.

By the highest and most revered authorities marriage is described, and rightly described, as the greatest of the five human relationships. It is the foundation of the State, and it holds out that prospect, which is so dear to the heart of every Chinaman, of obtaining sons who shall perform at the tombs of their parents the sacrifices which are necessary for the repose of their manes. In one respect, matrimonial alliances in China have an advantage over those in Western lands. They can never be undertaken in a hurry. There can be no running off of the young lady to the registry office some morning before her parents come down to breakfast, nor can a special licence be obtained in a moment to gratify a sudden caprice. In the houses of all well-to-do people the ceremony is surrounded by rites which make haste impossible, and the widest publicity is secured for the event. In dealing with social matters in so huge an empire as China, it is necessary to remember that practices vary in detail in different parts of the country. But throughout the length and breadth of the land the arrangement of marriages of both sons and daughters is a matter which is left entirely in the hands of the parents, who in every case employ a go-between or

match-maker, whose business it is to make himself or herself—for both men and women follow this strange calling—acquainted accurately with the circumstances of both families and the personal qualifications of the proposed bride and bridegroom. It is obvious that considerable trust and confidence have to be placed in these people, and it is also a fact that they not uncommonly betray this trust and confidence in the interests of rich people who are able to make it worth their while to represent a plain and ungainly girl as a Hebe, or a dissolute youth as a paragon of virtue. Archdeacon Gray, in his "China," describes a tragic scene which occurred at a wedding at which he was present. A dying mother, anxious to see her son married before she closed her eyes for ever, insisted on the marriage ceremony being performed at her bedside. On the completion of the rite the bridegroom raised the bride's veil and gazed on the features of a leper. The scene which followed was of a most painful description, and ended by the bride being incontinently repudiated and sent back to her parents. "To lie like a match-maker" is a common expression, and a published correspondence exists between a Chinese bridegroom and his friend, in which the former bitterly complains that his bride, far from being the beauty described by the go-between, is fat and marked deeply with small-pox. His friend, being of a practical turn of mind, and not being himself the victim, recommends the bridegroom to make the best of the bargain, and with cheap philosophy reminds him that if the lady is stout she is probably healthy, and that, though disfigured, she may very possibly be even as "an angel from

heaven," to use his own words. From the time that the match-maker is employed, until the bond is tied, there are six ceremonies to be performed. 1. The parents of the young man send the go-between to the parents of the girl, to inquire her name, and the moment of her birth, that the horoscopes of the two may be examined, in order to ascertain whether the proposed alliance will be a happy one. 2 If the eight characters of the horoscopes seem to augur aright, the man's friends send the match-maker back to make an offer of marriage. 3. If that be accepted, the lady's father is again requested to return an assent in writing. 4. Presents are then sent to the girl's parents according to the means of the parties. 5. The go-between requests them to choose a lucky day for the wedding. 6. The preliminaries are concluded by the bridegroom going or sending a party of friends with music to bring his wife to his house.

So soon as the first of these ceremonies is performed, the betrothal is considered binding; and in the cases of the engagement of children, nothing but disablement, or the affliction of leprosy, is considered potent enough to dissolve it. Certain superstitions, however, render the contract more easily dissoluble when the pair are of marriageable age. If, for instance, a china bowl should be broken, or any valuable article lost within three days of the engagement, the circumstance is considered sufficiently unlucky to justify the instant termination of the undertaking, and in cases where facts unfavourable to the one side, whether socially, physically, or morally, have, in the mean time, come to the knowledge of the other party to the contract,

advantage is taken of some such accidents to put an end to the negotiations. In accordance with usage, the letters which pass between the parents during the preliminaries are couched in good set terms, the sender of presents describes them as "mean" and "contemptible," while the recipient regards them as "honourable" and "priceless." The parent of the bride speaks of his daughter as "despicable," and his house as "a cold dwelling," while the bridegroom's people designate her as "your honoured beloved one," and her home as "a venerable palace."

The Chinese love of indirectness comes out conspicuously in the betrothal ceremonies. The bridegroom does nothing, and his father, who is the real negotiator, is represented by a friend of the bridegroom, who alone passes backwards and forwards between the two houses. The first duty of this "best man" is to carry to the lady's father a statement of the hour, day, month, and year of the bridegroom's birth, together with the maiden name of his mother; and to receive in return a document containing the same particulars concerning the bride. On receipt of these facts the fathers of the pair spread the documents on the family altars, and beseech the blessings of their ancestors on the match. Astrologers are next consulted, and, should the horoscopes of the young people be propitious, the best man is again sent with a letter making a formal proposal of marriage.

The following authentic letters, appropriate to this occasion, are good specimens of the bland self-depreciatory tone which is indulged in by fond fathers when exchanging presents. The first is from the parents of the would-be bridegroom, and runs

thus: "Prostrate, I beseech you not to disdain this cold and mean application, but to listen to the words of the match-maker, and to bestow your honourable daughter on my slavish son, that the pair may be bound together with silken threads, and be united in jadelike joy. In bright spring-time I will offer wedding gifts, and present a pair of geese. And let us hope that we may anticipate long-enduring happiness, and look forward through endless generations to the completion of the measure of their sincere attachment. May they sing of the Unicorn, and enjoy every felicity. Prostrate, I beg you to look favourably upon my proposal, and to bend the mirrorlike brightness of your glance upon these lines." In reply the lady's father, who was probably a wealthy man, and whose references therefore to his impecunious condition are intended only to exaggerate the wealth and position of the would-be bridegroom, writes: "A respectful communication. I have received your notice of a lucky day in spring for the ceremony of exchanging bridal presents. Your younger brother, being a plain and unpretentious man, cannot escort his daughter with a hundred chariots." [This is a reference to a king in the eighth century before Christ, who brought home his bride attended by an escort of this extent.] "She shall not, however, be without cotton skirts, hair-pins, and wooden brooches, as I will surely arrange for the trousseau of my impoverished green-windowed" (*i.e.* poor) "daughter. If you say that you seek the palace of the moon" (wedlock), "I shall ask for a sceptre from the grassy field, and so frustrate your design."

This phrase has reference to a man in ancient

times, who was told by a fairy that if he would plant some jewels in a certain grassy field, he should obtain a charming wife. He obeyed, and shortly afterwards made overtures of marriage to a lady who was renowned for her beauty and accomplishments. Her father, not particularly desiring the match, gave his consent on condition that the bridegroom presented the lady with a jade sceptre. Remembering the buried jewels, the bridegroom dug in the field and found to his delight a sceptre exactly answering to the description demanded. Of course, the marriage took place, and the pair lived happily ever afterwards. Historical allusions of this kind abound in such communications, and a curious symbolism is employed in the various rites. The plum-tree is held to symbolize marriage, probably because it is conspicuous for its beauty in spring-time, when, in China, as elsewhere, "young men's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love," and no youth sighs in verses for a bride, nor does any maiden in the harem lament in numbers her lonely condition, without references to the beauty of the blossom, and the excellence of the fruit.

The letter of the bridegroom's father is sent on a lucky day chosen by the astrologers, and is handed to the best man, with much ceremony, at the family altar, before which the writer performs the *kot'ow* in honour of his departed ancestors. On arriving at the bride's dwelling the groomsman is received with much state, and is conducted by his host to the ancestral hall, where a master of ceremonies stands ready to direct the rites. At a word from this potentate they both prostrate themselves before the ancestral tablets which stand

on the altar, and having risen from their knees resume their positions, the one on the east and the other on the west side of the hall. The groomsman then, with a few appropriate phrases, presents his host with the letter, and at the same time offers for his acceptance boxes of confectionary and a live pig, or, in some parts of the country, a pair of wild geese. "The choice of these birds as a nuptial present is so odd that one is apt to consider it as one of the peculiar outcomes of the topsy-turvy Chinese mind. . . . But it is not quite so; for we find from George Sand that at the marriage of French peasants in Berry, a goose, though a dead one, was commonly borne in the bridegroom's procession. 'Near,' writes the authoress, 'this bearer of a flowering and ribboned thyrsus is an expert spit-bearer, for under the foliage is a trussed goose which forms the object of the ceremony; around it are the carriers of the presents and the good singers, that is to say those who are clever and knowing and who are going to engage in an [amicable] quarrel with the followers of the bride.'" * It is odd to find the East and West allied in so curious a detail, but such marriage customs seem to be scarcely less widely spread than the rite itself.

So soon as the cakes and the box containing the letter have been placed on the altar, the host again prostrates himself and reads the letter, while the groomsman is led off to be regaled with tea and viands in the guest-chamber. The reply is handed to the groomsman with the same ceremonies as that with which the letter was received, and he is then invited to a feast which etiquette bids him refuse

* *Blackwood's Magazine*, November, 1887.

twice and accept on the third occasion. On an adjournment to the ancestral hall he is presented with return presents of cakes, and wends his way back to report proceedings to his principal.

Presents consisting of silks and satins, earrings, bracelets, and hair-pins, are next sent to the bride, and return gifts are offered by her parents. A sumptuous dinner, given by the bridegroom to his friends, announces the completion of this ceremony, which is known as *Napi*, or "The Presentation of Silks."

When sending the presents it is customary for the bridegroom to prepare two large cards containing the particulars of the engagement. On the one which he keeps is pasted a paper dragon, and on that which he sends to his bride, a phœnix, emblems which are held to symbolize the imperial qualities of the one and the brilliant beauty of the other. To each card are attached two pieces of red silk, which are tokens of the invisible bonds with which Fate has from their infancy connected the ankles of the pair, for, in China, as with us, marriages are said to be made in heaven. To that power is left the choice of a lucky day for the final rite. The astrologers who interpret the signs of the sky commonly pronounce a full moon to be the fortunate time, and so soon as this fixture is arranged, the bridegroom's father sends gifts of wine and mutton to the lady. Etiquette requires it that the groomsman should ask the bride's father to name the day, and that he should in his turn beg that the bride's future father-in-law should decide the point. This is the cue for the groomsman to produce from his sleeve the letter of which he is the bearer, announcing

the lucky date, which is already perfectly well known to all concerned. To this the host replies in stilted terms, expressing his concurrence, but adding his regret at having to part with his "insignificant daughter" so soon.

For some days before the date fixed the bride assumes all the panoply of woe, and weeps and wails without ceasing. On the day immediately preceding the wedding her trousseau and household furniture are sent to her future home, and though the trunks are always locked, cases have been known in which the bridegroom's female relatives, being unable to restrain their curiosity, have picked the locks to examine the dresses of the bride.

On the eventful day the bridegroom either goes himself, attended by a procession of friends and musicians, with flying banners bearing felicitous mottoes, to carry away his bride, or sends his *fidus Achates* similarly attended. In many parts of the country this ceremony takes place in the evening, and is a mere formality, whereas in others, as will be presently shown, it retains more of its original significance. On entering the bride's house the bridegroom is received by his father-in-law, who conducts him to the central hall, and there offers him a goblet of wine, from which the visitor pours out a libation to the emblematic geese in token of his nuptial fidelity, accompanying the action with a deep reverence to the family altar in confirmation of his vow. The bride, covered from head to foot with a red veil, is now introduced on the scene, and makes obeisance in the direction of the spot where the bridegroom is standing, for he is as invisible to her as she is to him. The procession then re-forms,

and the bride having been lifted into her sedan-chair by two women of good fortune, that is to say, who have both husbands and children living, is borne to her future home to the airs of well-known wedding melodies. On arriving at the portal of the house the bridegroom taps the door of the sedan-chair with his fan, and in response, the instructress of matrimony, who prompts every act of the bride, opens the door and hands out the still enshrouded young lady, who is carried bodily over a pan of lighted charcoal, or a red-hot coulter laid on the threshold, while at the same moment a servant offers for her acceptance some rice and preserved prunes.

It is curious to observe that the ceremony of lifting the bride over the threshold is found existing in all the four continents, and we also know that in ancient Rome the bridegroom received his bride with fire and water. It has been conjectured that the act of lifting the bride over fire may have some reference to purification, but we have no duly authoritative statement on the meaning of the act. In the reception hall the bridegroom awaits the bride, who prostrates herself before him, and he then for the first time lifts her veil and gazes on her features. The moment must be a trying one, especially on occasions when the go-between has concealed defects or exaggerated charms. Perhaps it is as well that etiquette forbids the utterance of a word, and in a silence which must often be golden, the bridegroom conducts his bride to the divan, when they seat themselves side by side, it being traditional that the one who sits on a part of the dress of the other is likely to hold rule in the

household. But the marriage has yet to be consecrated. For this purpose the young people repair to the hall, where, falling on their knees before the ancestral altar, the bridegroom announces to his ancestors that, in obedience to his parents' commands, he has taken so-and-so to wife, beseeching them at the same time to bestow their choicest gifts on himself and his partner. Prostrations in honour of heaven, earth, and the bridegroom's parents complete the ceremony, and the newly wedded couple retire to the semi-privacy of their apartments to enjoy a repast in which they pledge one another in the wedding goblet. In some parts of the country it is customary for the groom to join the guests at their feast in the outer hall, where he forms the subject of countless jokes, and is expected to submit to a like severe ordeal in the matter of riddles as that which enlivened Samson's wedding.

It is impossible not to recognize that many of the ceremonies which have been described are relics of the primitive rite of marriage by capture. The ideographic Chinese character which represent the word for marrying a wife bears on the face of it a reference to this ancient practice. The symbol for the words "to take" (取) is composed of "an ear" (耳) and "a hand" (又) signifying the act of seizing a prisoner by the ear—in like manner a slave is represented on paper by "a woman" and "a hand," which seems to imply that the earliest slaves were women captured from hostile tribes. The addition of a woman to the above symbol for "to take" (娶) converts it into one meaning to marry a wife, that is, "to take a wife." For to marry a man, another word altogether is used. In

the procession which, generally at night, goes to carry the bride to her new home is plainly observable a survival of the old-world usage, in compliance with which young men sallied out to snatch their consorts from their foes.

> "Lo, how the woman once was wooed!
> Forth leapt the savage from his lair,
> He felled her, and to nuptials rude,
> He dragged her, bleeding, by the hair.
> From that to Chloe's dainty wiles,
> And Portia's dignified consent,
> What distance!"

But even within the Chinese empire we find almost every gradation between these wide extremes. In Western China, among some of the native tribes it is customary for the bride to perch herself on the high branch of a large tree, while her elderly female relatives station themselves on the lower limbs armed with switches. Through this protecting force the bridegroom has to make his way, and is duly assailed by the dowagers before he reaches the object of his search. At Chinese weddings also it is not unusual for the bridegroom to be compelled to run the gauntlet on his way to the bride's chamber between rows of waiting women, who go through the farce of pretending to bar his progress. But the most perfect survival of the old rite is found among the Lolo tribes of China, who indulge in a long prelude of alternate feasting and lamentation before the wedding. At last, as the late Mr. Baber writes: "A crisis of tearfulness ensues, when suddenly the brothers, cousins, and friends of the husband burst upon the scene with tumult and loud shouting,

seize the almost distraught maid, places her pick-a-back on the shoulders of the best man, carry her hurriedly and violently away, and mount her on a horse, which gallops off to her new home. Violence is rather more than simulated, for though the male friends of the bride only repel the attacking party with showers of flour and wood-ashes, the attendant virgins are armed with sticks, which they have the fullest liberty to wield." This practice of carrying off the bride has its counterpart among the more civilized Chinese in the act of bearing the lady over the threshold of her house; and it exists in full force in Orissa, where General Campbell tells us in his "Personal Narrative of Service in Khondistan," he once "saw a man bearing away upon his back something enveloped in an ample covering of scarlet cloth; he was surrounded by twenty or thirty young fellows, and by them protected from the desperate attacks made upon him by a party of young women. On seeking an explanation of this novel scene," adds the writer, "I was told that the man had just been married, and his precious burden was his blooming bride, whom he was conveying to his own village."

Again, in certain districts in China, where the aborigines predominate, each girl, in her choice of her husband, is solely led "by nice direction of a maiden's eyes," and pairs off without any troublesome formalities with the youth she admires and who admires her. But to return to the orthodox Chinese; the marriage ceremonies having been completed, the young couple take up their abode in the house of the bridegroom's father, and, speaking generally, the contract remains binding until

death does them part. But the obligation is more social and religious than legal, and cases constantly occur in which the tie is broken by mutual consent, and freedom for the future secured without the interference of any court or proctor. Only lately, in a case of an appeal to Peking, it came out incidentally in the proceedings that one of the parties in the case had previously married a bride who, being discontented with the house to which she had been brought, incontinently left her spouse, and married another man. In popular history, also, there is a well-known case of a woodcutter who, having some knowledge of books, and being a devoted student, disgusted his flippant and foolish wife by attending more to the works of Confucius than to felling trees. Finding expostulation vain, his short-sighted partner deserted him and married a more business-like man. Left to himself, the woodcutter acquired such scholastic proficiency that he passed all the examinations with ease, and by a coincidence, was appointed prefect over the district where he had formerly lived. Among the men employed to make smooth the roadway for his arrival was his wife's second husband, to whom it chanced that she was in the act of bringing his dinner when her first venture's *cortège* passed by. A recognition was mutual, but as the prefect had equally consoled himself, nothing was said about the restitution of conjugal rights. Difficulties often arise, however, in cases where the husband is not a consenting party to the arrangement, but in such instances the husband commonly takes the law into his own hands, and recovers his errant wife by force, or engages friends and neighbours to intervene

and persuade the lady to return. The use of force not unfrequently brings the matter before the magistrate, but otherwise the law does not interfere —unless, indeed, formal complaint of a bigamous marriage is made, when the law orders that the offending woman shall be strangled. As a rule, however, public opinion is sufficient to bring the difference to a satisfactory conclusion. But apart from these irregular matrimonial causes, the law puts it in the power of the man to annul his marriage on any one of seven distinct grounds, among which disobedience to father-in-law or mother-in-law, and over-talkativeness are named. But even on occasions when these legal plaints are in question, a decree without any *nisi* is generally granted by a court composed of the elders of the neighbourhood, and not by the mandarins. In this and similar matters local social pressure takes the place of a wider public opinion. There are no newspapers in China beyond those published at the treaty ports, and people's attention, instead of being distracted by subjects of general or foreign importance, is centred in the affairs passing around them. The very stationary nature of the population adds force to this peculiarity. In most villages and small towns the majority of people are related to each other through the constantly widening circles of relatives which each marriage in the family tends to multiply. A minute acquaintance with every one else's affairs is the natural consequence of this kinship. No Chinaman ever stands alone. He forms one only of a general body, and to the opinion of this body he is compelled to yield obedience. He would no more venture to refuse to

submit even those concerns which we should consider most private to the arbitration of his neighbours than an Englishman would dream of flouting the decision of a judge and jury. In a well-known farce this peculiarity of Chinese society is amusingly illustrated. The hero of the play is a man, who, having married a Miss Plumblossom, has taken to himself a Miss Willow as a secondary wife, in accordance with the custom which will be presently described. To each lady a courtyard of the house is assigned, Plumblossom occupying the front part and Willow the rear premises. The first scene opens with the husband approaching his dwelling after a long absence. The evening is drawing in, and he tells his servant to drive to the back door without disturbing the elder lady. He is cordially greeted by Willow, in whose company he is enjoying an *alfresco* repast, when Plumblossom, having become aware of his arrival, presents herself upon the idyllic scene. Peace instantly vanishes. In piercing accents the intruder reproaches Willow for having robbed her of her privilege as mistress of the household of receiving her husband after his absence. Nothing daunted, this young lady defends herself, and replies with counter-reproaches in the shrillest of trebles, while the husband attempts to throw oil upon the troubled waters by occasional words of expostulation. So great is the tumult that the neighbours are disturbed, and on the essentially Chinese principle that every one else's business is your business, they determine to interfere, quoting as their justification a saying of a certain philosopher that, in cases of disturbance if the neighbours do not interfere, they become participators in the guilt of

the disputants. Two graybeards are therefore deputed to inquire on the spot into the circumstances of the quarrel. Their arrival on the scene, instead of prompting a desire on the part of the husband to eject them incontinently, and to tell them to mind their own business, is regarded by all concerned as the most natural thing in the world. The ladies submit their cases to their decision, and though it is some time before the storm has sufficiently subsided to enable them to arrive at the rights of the quarrel, they eventually consider themselves in a position to deliver judgment. They pronounce that, in the interests of peace in the neighbourhood, it is necessary that the husband should apportion his residence equally between the two courtyards, residing in one from the first of each month to the full moon, and in the other from the full moon to the end of the month. To this the ladies as well as the husband agree, but a further question is raised, which lady is to have which half of the month? Plumblossom claims the time of the waxing moon, and considers the waning period quite good enough for Willow. That young lady, on the contrary, claims that as it was then the first part of the month, and that as she was in possession, that period of the month should belong to her. This knotty point the graybeards find a difficulty in deciding, and they therefore determine to leave it to the throw of the dice. The ladies readily produce a trio of those endless sources of amusement, and Plumblossom throws first. To her infinite delight she throws two sixes and a cinque, and thinks herself secure. But, to the surprise of all, still better fortune befriends Willow, who throws

sixes and breaks out into a pæan of triumph, amid the strains of which her rival retires discomfited.

It seems almost anomalous after this apparent instance to the contrary to say that polygamy is not practised in China. But in the strictest sense this is true. A man goes through the full ceremonies of marriage with one woman only, except on very rare occasions. A certain godlike emperor of antiquity gave, we are told in the canonical histories, his two daughters in marriage to his successor. With such an example as this before them, the Chinese have always considered such double marriages admissible, and in many of the best known romances the heroes marry two young ladies of the same household, and if the authors are to be believed, always with the happiest results. In a popular novel which has been translated into several European languages, the hero makes love to a young lady through the medium of her waiting-maid, and with a despicable fickleness becomes enamoured of another paragon of learning and virtue, residing in another part of the country, who ultimately proves to be the cousin of his first love. Towards the end of the work, when the mists and doubts which surround the plot begin to clear, the two ladies find that their happiness is centred in the same object, and as they have become inseparable, they determine to endow the hero, who is eminently unworthy of them, except for the beauty of his verses, with the double prize. But such marriages, though they exist, are very exceptional, and the secondary wives which men take are received into the household with a much abridged form of ceremony. No nuptial sedan-

chair bears them in triumph to their new homes, and they enter the portals unattended by the musicians and processionists who accompany the first bride on her wedding-day. And, in fact, the relation of such a one to the mistress of the establishment is very much what Hagar's was to Sarah in Abraham's household. By conventional laws she owes obedience to the first wife, and only rises to a level with her in case progeny should be denied to the *ch'i*, as the Chinese term the wife, and be granted to her. A case of this kind occurred in the instance of the late emperor, who was the son of one of the young ladies who accompanied the empress to the palace, and whose birth raised his mother to the rank of empress. It is difficult for us who live under so entirely different a condition of things to realize such a state of domestic society as is here described, and though the advent of a secondary wife is occasionally resented, this is not by any means always the case. Not unfrequently ladies are pleased to have it so, considering that an addition to the household adds to their dignity. In complimentary language the *ch'i* is compared to the moon, and the secondary wife to a star, and in a well-known collection of published letters several are met with in which friends are congratulated on having taken "a star" to add lustre to the "moon."

It is impossible to suppose that, things being as has been described, the status of a wife can be anything but, to say the least, unfortunate. As has been remarked, however, "though the lot of Chinese women is less happy than that of their sisters in Europe, their ignorance of a better state

renders their present or prospective one more supportable ; happiness does not consist in absolute enjoyment, but in the idea which we have formed of it. A Chinese woman does not feel that any injustice is done her by depriving her of the right of assent to whom her partner shall be ; her wishes and her knowledge go no further than her domestic circle, and when she has been trained in her mother's apartments to the various duties and accomplishments of her sex, her removal to a husband's house brings to her no great change." This is no doubt to a great extent true in common life. Ignorance is unquestionably a protecting shield against many of the wounds inflicted by the repinings and regrets which arise from a perfect knowledge. And Chinese women are, as a rule, provided with an ample shield of this description. There are, however, exceptions. History tells us of women who have ruled the empire, directed armies, and made themselves illustrious in every walk of life commonly trodden by men ; and novelists assure us by their creations that not a few women have an abundant taste and skill in literature. The heroines of most novels have a pretty art in composing verses and writing essays, and so make congenial companions for the heroes, whose chief claims to distinction are gained not in the battlefield, or by personal prowess, but in their studies and before the examiners.

A monotonous and quiet existence is the most favourable *rôle* which a Chinese woman can expect to play. Confucius laid it down, and it is rank blasphemy to dissent from him, that a woman should not be heard of outside her own home.

Unhappily neither ignorance, nor the placid nature which belongs to most of them, is able to save them in all cases from the miseries inherent in the state of abject dependence which belongs to them. In the estimate of the other sex, Chinamen agree with a certain well-known Kentucky editor, who described women as "a side issue,"* and this view of the sex we find stereotyped in some of the ideographic characters of the language. For example, a wife is commonly written 婦, a compound which is composed of the symbol for a woman (女), and "a besom" (帚), having reference to her duties as a household drudge. No more complimentary are the characters employed to signify her characteristics and failings. Our greatest poet has taught us that tear-drops are "women's weapons," but with Chinamen "craft" and "dissimulation" (奸) are represented on paper by (女) "a woman's" (干) "weapon," and "to act craftily" (嫣) by (爲) "acting" (女) "the woman."

If a husband is driven to make mention of his wife he speaks of her as his "dull thorn," or by some equally uncomplimentary term. In ordinary life he regards her less as a companion than as a chattel, which in times of adversity may be disposed of by sale. In seasons of famine an open market is held of the wives and daughters of the poorer sufferers; and not long since, during a period of dearth in Northern China, so great a traffic sprung up in women and girls, that in some places nearly every available cart and conveyance were engaged to transport the newly-purchased slaves to the central provinces. When such is the

* "Chinese Characteristics," p. 290.

position which women occupy in China, it cannot but be that they occasionally suffer ill-usage at the hands of such husbands as are capable of cruelty. It is not at all uncommon for husbands to punish their wives severely, sometimes, no doubt, under great provocation, for Chinese women, untutored, unloved, and uncared for, have all the faults and failings of unreclaimed natures; but at others for little or no reason! The Abbé Huc tells a story of "a Chinese husband, who had a wife with whom he had lived happily for two years. But having conceived the idea that people were laughing at him, because he had never beaten her, he determined to make a beginning in such a way as to impress every spectator, and accordingly, though he had no fault to find with her," he beat her mercilessly.

Although this story carries with it the imprimatur of the worthy Abbé, it may properly be received with a certain amount of caution. But even if this particular instance may be an exaggeration, the facts that the question, "Does your husband beat you?" is very commonly put to English married ladies by Chinese women, and that the indignant negative with which the inquiry is happily always answered, invariably excites astonishment and incredulity, are sufficient to prove that Chinese women are not unusually subject to ill-treatment at the hands of their natural protectors. Occasionally, however, the wife has her revenge, and in the collections of anecdotes which abound there are plenty of stories of hen-pecked husbands and masterful wives. In one case a certain man who at times suffered much at the

hands of his wife was driven to seek refuge from her violence beneath his bed. Unwilling to allow her victim to escape her, the harridan called upon him to come out. "I won't," replied the man; "and when a man and husband says he won't, he won't." But experience shows that, after all, the rule tends in the opposite direction, and that which makes the position of a wife more than ordinarily pitiable, especially among the poorer classes, is that she has no one to appeal to, and no one to whom she can fly for refuge. By the accident of sex she is viewed as a burden by her parents, from her birth onwards, and if they succeed in marrying her off, they are only too glad to wash their hands of her altogether. Among ourselves a man is taught that he should leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, but the theory in China is that a man should cling to his father and mother and compel his wife to do the same.* When admitted into her new home it becomes her duty to wait on her parents-in-law in the same way as she has been accustomed to serve her own father and mother, and it is often from these elders that the unhappy bride suffers the greatest hardships and cruelty. So many are the disabilities attaching to married life in China, that many girls prefer going into Buddhist nunneries, or even committing suicide, to trusting their futures to the guardianship of men of whom they know practically nothing. Archdeacon Gray, in his "China," states that in 1873 eight young girls, residing near Canton, "who had been affianced, drowned themselves in order to avoid marriage. They clothed themselves in their best attire, and

* "Chinese Characteristics," p. 211.

at eleven o'clock, in the darkness of the night, having bound themselves together, threw themselves into a tributary stream of the Canton river." In some parts of the same province anti-matrimonial associations are formed, the members of which resist to the death the imposition of the marriage yoke. "The existence of this Amazonian League," writes a missionary long resident in the neighbourhood, "has long been known, but as to its rules and the number of its members, no definite information has come to hand. It is composed of young widows and marriageable girls. Dark hints are given as to the methods used to escape matrimony. The sudden demise of betrothed husbands, or the abrupt ending of the newly married husband's career, suggest unlawful means for dissolving the bonds." This is the sordid view of the position. Happily in this and in all other matters there is a reverse side to the shield, and in their own peculiar way the Chinese certainly enjoy a modicum of wedded bliss. In a modern Pekingese play, one of the characters, a widower, describes the even current of his late married life by saying that he and wife lived together as host and guest, and in most novels we read of husband and wife living harmoniously, if not rapturously together. In poetry also the love of home is constantly insisted on, and the misery of being separated from wife and children is the common plaint of the traveller and the exile. In a poem entitled "Midnight Thoughts," which was translated by Sir John Davis, the poet, after describing his inability to rest in the remote district in which he finds himself, goes on to say:—

"This solitary desertion!—how bitter do I find it!
Let me then push my roving to a distance:
Let me visit the passes and mountains a hundred leagues hence,
Like some devotee of Buddha, wandering amid clouds and torrents,
Ignorant of what is passing elsewhere.
How shall I forget the melancholy of my own home?
Thus dull and mournful through life's whole course,
My sorrows and pains can never have an end."

In the lines put in the mouths of the stay-at-home wives the melancholy of the traveller becomes a keen longing, and they lament in tearful notes the absence of their lords. But there is other and more direct evidence of the existence of happiness in the married state. Cases constantly appear in the *Peking Gazette* in which wives, unwilling to survive their husbands, commit suicide rather than live without them. One such instance was that of the wife of Kwo Sunglin, a brother of the last minister but one at our court. Through a long illness this lady nursed him with devoted tenderness until death came, when she ended her own existence by taking poison. Another case was lately reported to the emperor, in which a young widow, aged twenty-seven, declared her intention not to survive her lord, and remained for three days without taking nourishment. "At length," writes the memorialist, "having made an effort to rise and perform the mourning rites of prostration, she threw herself weeping on the ground, and breathed her last." The most curious phase of this devotion is the form which it takes in some of the southern provinces, where, after the manner of Sutteeism, the widow commits suicide in public in the presence of an applauding crowd. In an instance described by an eye-witness, a vast

procession escorted the young widow, who was dressed in scarlet and gold, and was borne in a richly decorated chair, to the scene of the tragedy. On arriving at the scaffold, on which stood a gallows, the lady mounted the platform, and having welcomed the crowd, partook, with some female relatives, of a prepared repast, which, adds the narrator, she appeared to appreciate extremely. She then scattered rice, herbs, and flowers among the crowd, at the same time thanking them for their attendance and upholding the motives which urged her to the step she was about to take. She then mounted on a chair, and having waved a final adieu to the crowd, adjusted the noose round her neck, and drawing a red handkerchief over her face, gave the signal for the removal of the support. With extraordinary self-possession, while hanging in mid-air, she placed her hands before her, and continued to make the usual form of salutation until complete unconsciousness ensued. Such devotion to the fond memory of husbands invariably receives the approval of the people, and when reported to the emperor gains his entire approbation.

From the above account of this particular phase of Chinese society it will be seen that it represents a condition of things which leaves much to be desired. Nor is the cause of the mischief far to seek. In the very subordinate position occupied by the women of China we see the *fons et origo* of the evil. In a State where women are degraded, the whole community suffers loss, and the first symptoms of the approach of a healthy and beneficial civilization is the elevation of women to their legitimate and useful position in society. At

present no trace of the dawn of a better day appears on the horizon of China, but the example which has been set by Japan leads one to hope that the day is not far distant when the slow-moving Chinaman will be induced to follow in the footsteps of their more advanced neighbour. Until quite recently the position of women in the Land of the Rising Sun was every whit as unworthy as that now occupied by their Chinese sisters. Happily the experience gained in western lands has taught the Japanese that the untrammelled society of educated and pure-minded women exercises a wholesome and elevating effect on a nation. With the intuitive perception which they possess for what is best and wisest in foreign systems, they have, by a course of sound education, begun to prepare the women of the country for the new position which it is intended that they should occupy, and already an example is being set by the empress and other leaders of fashion, of the better part they are expected to play. This change cannot be without its influence on China, and though we know that the surface of small pools is more easily agitated than the face of larger waters, yet it cannot but be that the spirit of reform which is now abroad will influence even the sluggish temperament of the Chinese nation, and will eventually stir to the depths the minds of this hitherto changeless people.

CHAPTER XII.

FUNERAL RITES.

"I VENTURE to ask about death," said Chi Lu to Confucius. "While you do not know about life, how can you know about death?" was the unsatisfying reply. And though this is the orthodox Confucian view of the momentous question, the people at large have bettered the instruction of the sage and have developed a full faith in an after life, in which those who have done good pass to the blissful regions of the west, where, surrounded with peace and happiness, they live an eternal round of joy; and those that have done evil are relegated to the infernal regions, where executioners even more cruel than those to which they are accustomed on earth, torture with merciless brutality. Authors of works of a religious nature delight in describing in detail the horrors that await the spirits of evil-doers. They are sawn asunder, they are devoured by wild beasts, they are thrown into caldrons of boiling oil, they are committed to the flames, and if there are any other shameful and violent deaths, they form a treasured part of the punishments of the condemned.

These beliefs find expression in the elaborate ceremonial which surrounds the burial of the dead.

On the approach of death the invalid is borne into the central hall, where, on a bed of boards, he is gently laid with his feet towards the door. In preparation for the decease his robes and hat of office, if he be a mandarin, and, if a commoner, his best attire, are placed beside him, and when the last supreme moment arrives he is dressed in state, and so meets his fate in full canonicals. After death a priest is summoned, who, after having saved the soul from perdition by the use of incantations, calls upon one of the three spirits which are said to inhabit every man, to hasten to the enjoyment of bliss in the empyrean regions of the west. Of the two other spirits, one is supposed eventually to remain with the corpse in the grave, and the other to be attached to the ancestral tablet which ultimately finds its place in the family hall. When this ceremony is completed, the chief mourner, in the company of friends and supporters—for grief is supposed to have so broken him down as to have rendered him unable to walk without the help of a friendly arm and of a sustaining staff—goes to the nearest river or stream "to buy water" to lave the features of the dead. Having thrown some copper cash into the water, accompanied sometimes by a small fish, which is supposed to announce the transaction to the river god, he fills a bowl from the current and returns to perform his sacred office. The coffin is a massive structure, made of four boards, from three to four inches in thickness, of a hard and durable wood. In this the body is laid on a bed of quicklime and charcoal, and the cover is hermetically sealed with cement. This is necessary for the sake of the survivors, since custom

provides that the coffin should remain above ground for seven times seven days, and it sometimes happens that the inability of the astrologers to discover a lucky day for the interment, entails a still longer pre-sepulchral period.

Much virtue exists in the style and nature of the coffin, and most men as they advance in years provide themselves with their future narrow beds, if, indeed, their sons have not been sufficiently filially minded to make them presents of them. A tragic incident, in which an old man's coffin formed a leading feature, was lately described in the *Peking Gazette*. A certain Mr. Chia had a son who was as dissolute as he was disrespectful, and who, in a moment of financial pressure, sold the coffin which his father, with prudent foresight, had prepared for his final resting-place. On the theft being discovered, Chia at once charged his son with the crime, and in his anger swore that if the coffin were not returned he would, so soon as he recovered from an illness from which he was suffering, bring him before the authorities and cause him to be put to death. This threat so enraged the young man that, in a moment of drunken fury, he strangled his father. For such a crime there could be only one sentence, and the wretched criminal was condemned to the slow and lingering process of being sliced to death.*

Before closing the coffin it is customary to put in the mouth of the deceased five precious substances, which vary in value with the wealth of the family. The Chinese do not offer any explanation of this practice, not even the very reasonable

* *Translation of Peking Gazette*, 1891.

Roman explanation, that the money so placed serves as the wage due to Charon for the passage over the Styx. In some parts of the country, also, it is usual to deposit by the side of the body any object or objects, such as books, pipes, etc., which may have been especially valued by the deceased. The coffin is closed in the presence of the family, who prostrate themselves before the bier. When the day chosen by the soothsayers for the interment arrives, offerings of cooked provisions are placed beside the coffin, and the mourners, dressed in coarse white sackcloth, perform endless prostrations before it. Should the deceased have been a man of consideration, a vast concourse assembles to follow him to the grave. A curious superstition attaches to the first raising of the coffin. At the moment that the bearers lift the sarcophagus, the relatives all fly from the room, it being believed that should any misadventure occur, the spirit of the deceased would avenge itself on all those who were present at the moment of the removal. The number of bearers is regulated by the position of the family, and varies from sixty-four to four.

When the procession is formed, a man carrying a long streamer of white cloth, known as the "soul-cloth," marches in front, followed by two men bearing banners, on which are inscribed sentences implying a hope that the deceased may be enjoying himself in the company of the blessed. After these comes a man holding up a white cock, which is supposed to summon the soul to accompany the body, and behind him follow two sedan-chairs, in the first of which is carried the ancestral tablet of the dead man, and in the second his portrait. Supporting

themselves by the shafts of these sedan-chairs, two of the principal mourners drag themselves along. The eldest son, if there be one, immediately precedes the coffin, and affects complete inability to walk without the help of the staff of wood, or of bamboo, according to whether he is mourning for his father or his mother, which he carries in his hand. Behind the coffin follow the female relatives and friends. Even on this solemn occasion the frivolous rules for the separation of the sexes are rigorously observed, and a white cord, held at the ends by two men, is sometimes used to separate the male from the female mourners. As the procession advances, paper money is scattered on all sides to appease the hunger of any destitute ghosts which may be haunting the road. With the coffin a pot of rice is lowered into the grave, and grains and tea are scattered over it. In some parts of the south it is customary to bury effigies of cows in the grave as correctives against evil influences. As the grave-diggers shovel in earth to earth, the priest takes the white cock, and, standing at the foot of the tomb, makes the bird bow thrice towards the coffin. This strange rite is repeated by the chief mourners, and the "soul-cloth" is then burned to ashes. After a short exhortation from one of the friends of the deceased, the procession re-forms, and returns to the house in the same order in which it set out.

On crossing the threshold of their home, it is sometimes customary for the mourners to purify themselves by stepping over a fire made of straw, after which their first duty is to carry the deceased's tablet, with every token of respect, to the principal

room, where it remains for a hundred days. The mourners then proceed to celebrate "the feast of the dead," and with that the funeral ceremony may be said to be brought to a close. For thirty days the nearest relatives of the deceased abstain from shaving their heads or changing their clothes, and for twenty-seven months sons are expected to wear all the panoply of woe. Married daughters, having passed out of the family circle, are not always invited to the funeral obsequies; but when they are, they are not expected to mourn for more than seven days. At the end of that time they adorn themselves once again in jewellery and colours, and so return to their homes, it being considered contrary to etiquette for them to carry the signs of lamentation into their husbands' presence.

Many of the ceremonials surrounding funerals vary in different parts of the country as much as the shapes given to the tombs. In some parts it is the practice for the mourners to put on mourning only on the third day after the death has taken place, it being considered that it is within the bounds of possibility that a trance, and not death, may hold the patient senseless. For a considerable period those who are husbands are bound to be as strangers to their wives, and all are forbidden to seek recreation at the theatres or concert-rooms. For seven days a widow mourning the loss of her husband is supposed to show her grief by sitting on the ground instead of on chairs, and by sleeping upon a mat instead of upon her bed. On the seventh day it is customary for friends to send presents of cakes and banners, the first of which are presented as offerings to the dead man, while the banners are hung

round the hall in which the coffin reposes. By this time all hope of his return to life has disappeared, and the letters which accompany the gifts of friends are burnt in the sacred fire and are so transmitted to the manes of the dead in the blessed regions of the West. On the same day priests offer up prayers for the flight of the soul to its new abode, and construct a bridge by an arrangement of tables and stools over which the effigy of the deceased is carried, thus emblematizing the removal of the soul from Hell to Heaven.

In many of the ceremonies we see traces of the old-world fear that the ghostly presence of the dead may possibly haunt the survivors. The priest at the grave commonly adjures the spirit to remain with the body; and, as a rule, a sufficiently weighty superincumbent mass of earth, stone, or masonry is placed over the tomb to prevent the possibility of a resurrection. In the hilly south the graves are dug on the sides of hills, and the tomb is shaped like a Greek Ω. In the north, where the country is for the most part flat, conically shaped mounds surrounded by a bank and ditch form the ordinary graves. Wealthy families generally have graveyards of their own, surrounded by a belt of cypress trees, which are supposed to offer complete protection from a huge monster who, ghoul-like, delights in devouring the dead. The tombs of nobles are often approached by an avenue of stone figures, representing ministers of state, warriors, horses, camels, sheep, tigers, etc., and the same kinds of statues ornament the imperial tombs; the figures are, as a rule, more than life-size, and in many cases are executed with considerable taste and skill.

The body of a member of a family who dies away from home is invariably brought back to the ancestral hall with one exception. If his home should be within the walls of a city, no ceremonial punctilios and no sentimental feelings avail to counterbalance the law which forbids the introduction of a dead body within the walls of a city. Occasionally some mandarin who has died in his country's service, after having gained honours and distinctions, is allowed by the special edict of the emperor to be borne through the streets of his native city, but even the body of such a one is not allowed to rest within the walls. This rule may possibly show that the Chinese are not entirely blind to the laws of sanitation, and the regulation which forbids all intramural burial seems also to point in the same direction.

No such ceremonies as those described above attend the funerals of infants, unmarried children, concubines, or slaves, and it is no uncommon sight to see in the north of China the bodies of these unfortunates thrown out upon the plains and on the hills to be devoured by beasts of prey. Cremation is never practised in China except in the case of Buddhist priests, and the only contingency in which the practice is sanctioned by the penal code is when relatives "happen to die in a distant country and the children or grandchildren are unable to bring the corpse to be interred in the native district of the deceased." In all other circumstances the penalty of a hundred blows is to be awarded to any one "who consumes a corpse with fire or commits it to the waters." In bygone days it was the practice, on the death of an emperor, to immolate the

favourite wives at the tomb of the deceased potentate, and at the grave of Shunchi, the first emperor of the present dynasty, thirty persons were buried beside him. His son Kanghk'si (1661–1721), however, put an end to the practice by commanding that the four wives who had paid him the compliment of wishing to accompany him into Hades should be forbidden to sacrifice their lives for so useless a purpose.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUR COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH CHINA.

Our commercial relations with China are of deep importance to us as a nation. They have extended over nearly three centuries with varying fortunes; they now represent an annual value of upwards of twelve millions sterling, and they possess the potentiality of almost unlimited extension in the future.

The subject naturally divides itself, like an old-fashioned sermon, into three heads. First, the history of our trade with China; secondly, our present relations with that country; and thirdly, the prospect which lies before us in the Flowery Land.

The antiquity of the Chinese is so infinitely greater than any of which we can boast, that it need not surprise us to hear that, many centuries before we existed as a nation, their merchants were familiar figures in the bazaars of western Asia, and that their porcelains and silken goods were common objects in the markets of eastern and southern Europe. As early as the beginning of our era the fame of the wealth and power of China had spread throughout the Old World, and in the second century Marcus Aurelius thought it not beneath his dignity to send an embassy to the ruling emperor.

Both by sea and land Chinese travellers penetrated into the west, and their early presence in Egypt was attested not many years ago, by the discovery of some China porcelain bottles in mummy-containing tombs. Probably these were brought in some of the ships which we know visited the coast of Malabar and the Persian Gulf during the early centuries of the era. Attracted by the reports brought by the adventurous crews of these argosies of the might and wealth of China, Arab traders took heart of grace, and, following in the reverse track of the Chinese, found their way to Cathay, and settled themselves at Canton and on the coasts of the Provinces of Fuhkien and Cheh-kiang.

It was not, however, until after the irruption of the Mongols into the west that European travellers ventured to cross Asia into China. At the head of these daring explorers went Christian missionaries, who feared neither the length of the journey nor the perils of the way so long as there was a chance of their being able to convert the barbarous subjects of the heathen khans to the peaceful doctrines of Christianity.

In the wake of these pioneers of civilization followed lay travellers, who, from no other motive than love of gain and adventure, penetrated into every country of Asia; and who, in the leisurely manner common to wayfarers in those halcyon days before hurry was known, made themselves citizens of every country and denizens of every clime. The best-known of these was Marco Polo, who made China his home for two decades, and who so won the confidence of the great Kublai Khan, that for three years he held the office of prefect of one of

the busiest cities in the country. His immortal pages first gave to Europe an idea of the wealth and extent of the Chinese empire, of the richness of its marts, of the fertility of its soil, of the magnificence of its palaces and cities, and of the number and magnitude of the canals and roads which covered its surface.

It has been observed with justice that it has often been found that "profuse expenditure, heavy taxation, absurd commercial restrictions, corrupt tribunals, disastrous wars, seditions, persecutions, conflagrations, inundations, have not been able to destroy capital so fast as the exertions of private citizens have been able to create it." Of the truth of this saying China is a signal example. In spite of an iniquitous system of administration, of corruption in high places, of the sale of justice, of dynastic changes, of revolutions, of floods, of famines, and of pestilences, the national prosperity of the empire has gradually increased and been built up, until, at a period before our commerce had taken shape, Trade's proud empire held its sway throughout the land. The Chinese are essentially a nation of shopkeepers. They have a genius for trade, as is shown by the fact that almost wherever they have settled, whether in Burmah, Siam, Tonquin, or the Straits Settlements, they have monopolized the higher branches of commerce, leaving to the native races the uncongenial tasks of hewing wood and drawing water. From their earliest history they have shown their capacity for amassing wealth. To a disciple who asked Confucius what should be done for the people who had become so numerous, the sage replied, "Enrich them." Acting on this dictum,

the nation's rulers have made the well-being of the people one of their main objects, not, however, without an eye to the well-known principle, that there are no greater foes to violence and disorder than hostages given to fortune in the shape of goods and warehouses. And it must be confessed that the people have ably seconded the objects of their sovereigns. Every branch of commerce with which they are familiar has been eagerly developed, and it is not too much to say that, given the machinery which they possess, they have done as much as the wit and energy of man could possibly have accomplished to advance the trade and manufactures of the country.

Unhappily, however, the people have been grievously hampered in their operations by other political views of the ancient sages. Neither Confucius nor Mencius would allow for an instant that any foreigner had a right to consider himself as an equal with a native of the Middle Kingdom. "Indulgent treatment of men from a distance," with dutiful submission on their part to the commands of the Son of Heaven, were the conditions which Confucius recommended in dealing with foreigners; and Mencius gives us his estimate of the Gentile nations when he said, "I have heard of men using the doctrines of our great land to change barbarians, but I never yet heard of any being changed by barbarians. I have heard of birds leaving dark valleys to remove to lofty trees, but I have not heard of their descending from lofty trees to enter into dark valleys." These are not the words of unadulterated wisdom, and it is strange, therefore, to find that a practically minded people like the

Chinese should be more influenced by the opinions of these remote philosophers than by the evidence of their own senses. Throughout the whole history of foreign relations with China, the ignorant and supercilious dicta of so-called sages have tended to foster ridiculous assumptions on the part of the mandarins; and it has unfortunately to be confessed, that even at the present day, though the foreign legations have been established at Peking for more than a quarter of a century, only a small breach has been made in the wall of conceit which separates China from the outer world.

In tracing the history of our own commerce with China we find that it was in the reign of Queen Elizabeth—that great period in our nation's history when the mental and bodily vigour of our countrymen awoke to new life and energy—that the first ships left our shores for Cathay. These vessels, which were equipped at the expense of Sir Robert Dudley, and were named *The Bear*, *The Bear's Whelp*, and *The Benjamin*, were destined never to reach their goal. As a matter of fact they got no further than the neighbourhood of the West Indies, where they perished. Four years later a charter was granted to "the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies;" and in 1606 James I. granted permission to Sir Edward Michelborne to trade in "Cathay, China, Japan, Corea, and Cambodia." Later again, Oliver Cromwell gave a charter to a "Company of Merchant Adventurers" to trade in eastern Asia, and in 1698 another company came into existence, under the title of "The General Society trading to the East Indies," or "English Company."

But meanwhile private enterprise had been at work, and in 1635 a Captain Weddell, in command of some English ships, arrived at Macao bearing letters from the Viceroy of Goa to the Portuguese governor of that port. Unfortunately for the success of his venture, the auspices under which he presented himself to the Chinese were the very worst he could have chosen. The Portuguese were already well known in China. During the preceding century they had established themselves at Ning-po and Macao, and although at first they had been favourably received, their violence and unruly conduct belied the good opinion which had been formed of them. At Ning-po they so outraged the feelings of the natives by repeating on Chinese soil a squalid version of the rape of the Sabines that the Chinese rose against them, and "destroyed twelve thousand Christians, including eight hundred Portuguese, and burned thirty-five ships and two junks." At Macao they held their own only by virtue of fortifications, which formed a protection to them from the assaults of the natives. The Chinese were not likely, therefore, to look with favour on any one coming under the ægis of the Portuguese name. But a still further blow was struck by his patron at the success of Captain Weddell's expedition. The Portuguese governor so misrepresented the object of the Englishman to the Viceroy of Canton, that when the British vessels attempted to approach that city they were fired upon by the Bogue Forts. Being thus challenged, and greatly incensed, Captain Weddell returned the fire and captured the forts—an operation which has since been repeated on several occasions by British sailors.

The result, however, of the expedition was not sufficiently encouraging to induce others to follow suit, and it was not until 1664, after the revolution which displaced the Ming dynasty in favour of the present Manchu line of sovereigns, that any further attempt was made to open communication with China. Amoy was the port chosen at which to establish trade, and it was thence that the first supply of tea was brought to England, as is evidenced by the name *Té* under which designation our grandmothers knew the leaf. In the poetry of the last century we have abundant evidence of the currency of this pronunciation—witness the well-known lines of Pope on Hampton Court Palace—

> "Here thou, Great Anna! whom three realms obey,
> Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea."

But the restrictions placed by the mandarins upon British trade along the coast was such that it did not flourish, and eventually it became concentrated at Canton. There, however, the Chinese, true to their colours, threw every obstacle they could in the way of the merchants. They appointed one man who alone had the right of trading with them, and in addition to the original duty of 4 per cent. on all goods, whether exports or imports, they laid a further burden of 12 per cent. on imports and 10 per cent. on exports.

It was plainly impossible that a profitable trade could be carried on under such disabilities, and in answer to repeated remonstrances the extra 10 per cent. on exports was taken off; but with characteristic conceit the emperor coupled the relaxation with the

condition that the foreign merchants should bear upon their knees the act of grace read. This humiliating performance was happily averted by the united front shown by the community to the insulting proposition. But the attempt to impose it was characteristic of the manner in which the mandarins then treated the foreign merchants, and is characteristic of the spirit which even now inspires much of their foreign policy. Though as time went on matters improved slightly, the grievances under which the merchants suffered up to the time of the Treaty of 1842 were burdensome in the extreme. They were virtually prisoners in the factory ; they were allowed to communicate only with the Hong merchants, who were appointed by the governor of the city, and who were held responsible for all debts incurred and all irregularities committed by the foreign merchants. They had imposed upon them eight regulations, framed by the mandarins for their conduct, one of which strictly prohibited the introduction into the factory of European women, guns, spears, or any arms, and another of which forbade them to row on the river, or to take any exercise for pleasure outside the factory grounds. Neither were these rules allowed to be treated as dead letters. On the slightest infraction of them the trade was stopped, and sufficient pressure was brought to bear to compel compliance.

Twice during this period the British Government sent Embassies to China. In 1792 Lord Macartney visited Peking, and had several interviews with the Emperor K'ienlung, who received him with courtesy, and showed every consideration both to himself and his suite. From the interesting

account of the embassy, subsequently published by Sir George Staunton, one of the staff, we learn how much the members of the embassy were struck by the magnificence of the emperor's palaces, the beauty of his grounds, the wealth of the cities, and the fertility of the country. But from a political point of view the mission proved abortive. The several points which the ambassador was instructed to urge on the Chinese Government, viz. the authority to open Chusan, Ning-po, and Tientsin to foreign trade, the abolition of transit dues between Macao and Canton, and the removal of all illegal taxation on foreign goods, were left *in statu quo ante.* The civility, however, which had been shown by the emperor to the mission roused the smouldering hatred of the anti-foreign party, who did everything in their power to drive the foreigners, and especially the English out of Canton. Lord Amherst's mission, in 1816, had not even the same appearance of success which attended Lord Macartney's. On arriving at Peking, after an unusually tiring and hurried journey, the minister was required to present himself at once before the emperor. Such a breach of diplomatic as well as of social usage was resented by Lord Amherst, who refused to appear in the imperial presence with the stains of travel and fatigue upon him. The kind of man the emperor was may be gauged by the opening sentence of a letter which he addressed to George III. of pious memory:—"Your Majesty's kingdom," he wrote, "is at a remote distance beyond the seas, but is observant of its duties, and obedient to its laws, beholding from afar the glory of our empire, and respectfully admiring the

perfection of our government." A man who could pen such lines to our sovereign was not likely to put up with a refusal from that sovereign's ambassador, and he at once gave orders that Lord Amherst should be sent about his business.

The conduct of the Chinese had been so bad that this diplomatic miscarriage could scarcely add to its condemnation, and matters went on at Canton pretty much as formerly. The merchants were kept in a state of tutelage, and were not allowed to visit Macao or to return to Canton without special leave, entailing a cost of about £80 a trip; their commercial dealings were narrowly circumscribed, and every possible insult was offered to them. Thus things stood in 1834, when it was determined to cancel the charter of the East India Company, and to appoint a minister plenipotentiary to watch over the interest of the British community. The evil fortune which had attended our previous attempts to open new relations with the Chinese court was present on this occasion also. Both the mission of Lord Macartney and that of Lord Amherst had synchronized with the wars in Nepal, in both of which we were represented as the foe of China; and at the time of the appointment of Lord Napier as minister plenipotentiary the natives were agitated by an apprehension that the silver exported from the country to pay for the opium imported was rapidly draining the empire of its wealth. A report had been made in 1833 to the throne stating that sixty million taels of silver—the equivalent of £20,000,000 sterling—had been sent out of the realm in payment for a drug which was still further impoverishing the country

by destroying the energy and moral fibre of the people.

Further, the arrival of Lord Napier, though expected by the mandarins, was not of the nature they had anticipated. They had thought that he would have been a mere headman over the merchants, and would be willing to eat the very humble pie which had been the habitual fare of the inhabitants of the factory. But, to their surprise and annoyance, he came up to Canton without asking for the required permission to do so, and actually wrote direct to the viceroy asking for an interview instead of communicating with him through the syndicate of native merchants. The viceroy was in no humour to endure such presumption. He therefore refused to receive any communication from the minister except in the shape of a petition, and explained his position by saying, "That the great ministers of the Celestial Empire, unless with regard to affairs of going to court and carrying tribute, or in obedience to imperial commands, are not permitted to have interviews with outside barbarians." Lord Napier finding peaceable overtures unavailing, and not having sufficient troops at his back to enforce his demands, withdrew to Macao, where he died from an illness produced by the worry and annoyance to which he had been subjected.

Captain Elliot, who succeeded Lord Napier, met with an intensified opposition from the mandarins, which was still further aggravated by the arrival at Canton of Commissioner Lin, who was charged by the emperor with the duty of "cutting off the fountain of evil," *i.e.* opium. Already Captain Elliot

had been obliged by force of circumstances to issue a notice warning British subjects to discontinue the illicit opium trade; and when, therefore, Lin, on his arrival, demanded the surrender within three days of all opium held by foreigners, the merchants were compelled to submit. But even this surrender did not satisfy Lin, whose ultimate object was not so much to put a stop to the opium trade as to drive the Europeans off the coast. He shortly afterwards demanded from Captain Elliot that all the opium which had accumulated since the previous surrender should be handed over to him. To this also Captain Elliot agreed, and in the result more than twenty thousand chests of the drug, of the estimated value of over £2,000,000 sterling, were given up. Experience has proved that to yield to the demands of the Chinese in the hope of conciliating them is as futile as it is weak. So Captain Elliot found on this occasion. The concession he had made, which should have more than satisfied Lin, only encouraged him to make further and more exacting demands, until at last even Captain Elliot's patience was exhausted, and he placed the direction of affairs in the hands of Admiral Sir John Bremer. After some unimportant engagements in the Canton river the fleet sailed northwards, occupied Chusan, and advanced to the mouth of the Peiho, the river leading to Peking. Such a proximity of the uncontrollably fierce barbarians disturbed the Court of Peking not a little, and Kishên, the Governor of Chili, was sent post-haste to stop the advance of the English ambassador. Unfortunately, Captain Elliot yielded to Kishên's wishes, as he had before yielded to Lin's

demands; and after having been kept loitering at the mouth of the Peiho for some time, was induced to transfer the scene of his negotiations to Canton. This was but a move in the accustomed Fabian policy of the Chinese, and was provocative only of further contention between the two powers. At last affairs reached such a pitch that the Queen declared war, and despatched Sir Henry Pottinger as plenipotentiary, with a force under Sir Hugh Gough and Admiral Parker to support him. The Chinese now learned too late the folly of their action. In quick succession Amoy, Chusan, Ning-po, Shanghai, and Chinkiang were taken, and the guns of Admiral Parker's ships were about to open on Nanking when Chinese commissioners appeared with authority to make terms.

In studying the action of the Chinese, it is curious to observe with what alacrity they act under the influence of fear, and how immovable they are when there is nothing more to dread than the interchange of despatches and interviews. With unwonted celerity the commissioners conducted their negotiations with Sir Henry Pottinger and their references to Peking, and on the 29th of August, 1842, a treaty was signed by which Hong Kong was ceded to England, the ports of Amoy, Foochow, Ning-po, and Shanghai were opened to trade, and 21,000,000 dols. were agreed to be paid in compensation for the opium destroyed (6,000,000 dols.), in consideration of the debts of the defaulting Hong merchants (3,000,000 dols.), and for the expenses of the war (12,000,000 dols.).

These concessions were wrung from the Chinese *vi et armis*, and were grudgingly acted upon.

Every obstruction and annoyance which could be invented was placed in the way of foreign trade, and the foreigners themselves were treated with studied contempt. A fair indication of the manner in which the officials regarded them and their claims to equality was given by the fact that, in spite of the agreement arrived at with Sir John Davis for the opening of the city of Canton, foreigners were persistently kept outside the gates, until the capture of the town during the next war brought the mandarins to their senses.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WAR OF 1860.

THE events connected with this diplomatic struggle are so graphically illustrative of the attitude of the Chinese towards foreigners that they are worth recounting. By the treaty of 1842, the additional ports of Amoy, Foochow, Ning-po, and Shanghai were declared open to trade. This concession, it was understood, implied also the right of foreigners to go in and out of the cities. At all these ports this privilege was fully accorded, but at Canton it was peremptorily withheld. In China, as in all Eastern countries, the exclusion of foreigners from the ordinary rights belonging to the meanest of the natives is naturally regarded as evidence of inferiority. For us to accept such a position is to court insult and outrage. One effect of the treatment thus accorded to us at Canton was to imperil the life of any Englishman who dared to wander beyond the confines of the settlement. In 1847 a small party of Englishmen ventured as far as Fatshan, a city some miles from Canton, and were there set upon by the inhabitants, from whose hands they barely escaped with their lives. Sir John Davis, who was then Governor of Hong Kong, recognizing the danger of the position, determined

to make a demonstration before Canton, and to demand the concession of the right to enter the walls of the town. Keying, the Governor-General of Canton, being quite unprepared for this action, was taken by surprise when, as he stated in his memorial on the subject to the emperor,* "Davis, the chief of the barbarians, with three steam vessels and upwards of twenty lorchas and boats, and a thousand and odd soldiers, came suddenly into the Canton river, and anchored off the thirteen hongs." He still refused, however, to receive Sir John Davis within the walls, but agreed to an interview at the foreign settlement, when, "having first reproved him for the guilt of breaking the treaty, he next inquired his reason for taking the field. . . . His language," continued Keying, "was wrathful in the extreme, and, although after being repeatedly shown the right path he consented to let the Fatshan affair remain where it was, he continued obstinately bent upon the admission into the city. The desire of the barbarians to be admitted into the city proceeds," Keying was good enough to say, "from no other motive than that they consider it an honour to enter the official residencies, and visit the authorities." †

Though such were the sentiments with which Keying regarded the demand, he yet thought it prudent to agree that the city should be opened to foreigners at the expiration of two years (1849). The comment passed by Keying's imperial master on these proceedings was condemnatory throughout. "When he (Keying) was at Canton," wrote

* Wade, "State of China, 1850–51" (privately printed).

† Ibid.

his majesty, "he did nothing but oppress the people to gratify the barbarians, never looking to the interests of the state.. This was shown plainly in the discussion regarding their entry into the city. On the one hand he wronged the divine principle of justice; on the other he outraged their feelings till he all but occasioned hostilities." * With a foolish vanity which must be unintelligible to all those who are unacquainted with the feasts of adulation which are daily laid before his majesty, the emperor went on to say that, when summoned to an audience, Keying had "spoken of the English barbarians, stating how much they were to be dreaded, and what need there would be for conciliating them should any difficulty present itself. He thought to deceive us," adds his angered majesty, "into ignorance of his treachery, but while he strove to make sure of his office and emoluments, the longer he declaimed the more glaring appeared his loss of all principle. His speech was as the raving of a mad dog; he was even less an object of pity." †

The history of all our negotiations with the Chinese goes to show that, when driven into a corner, they invariably yield on paper the concessions demanded of them. This they do, in nine cases out of ten, to pacify the barbarian, and without the least intention of faithfully fulfilling their engagements. So it was in this case. As the time approached for the execution of Keying's promise to throw open the gates of Canton, the governor-general, who had succeeded him in

* Wade, "State of China, 1850–51" (privately printed).
† Ibid.

office, declined to act up to the agreement. Like Keying, Sir John Davis had yielded place to a successor, and Sir George Bonham being unaccustomed to the Chinese and their shifty diplomacy, unfortunately allowed himself to be cajoled into yielding the point, and allowed the matter to remain in abeyance. "Not long since," wrote the Emperor Taokwang, in an edict on the subject, "the English barbarians having once more put forward their claim to be admitted into the city of Canton, the Governor-General Sü and his colleagues had addressed a number of memorials to us, describing in succession the measures adopted by them. . . . They have this day announced by an express that, with the assistance of the money which the trading community of the place, actuated by a deep sense of patriotism, had subscribed to fend off dishonour, and with the co-operation of the gentry and *litérati*, the question of admission into the city was set at rest. . . . Thus, without injury to a soldier, without firing an arrow, the governor-general and governor have given peace to the people and pacified the barbarians, whom they have reduced to obedience." *

The result of this concession was, as might have been anticipated, an increase in the insults offered to foreigners, and of the restrictions which were put upon foreign trade. So plain and palpable did these evils become that when Sir John Bowring succeeded Sir George Bonham as minister he was instructed carefully to watch over and insist upon the performance by the Chinese authorities of their engagements. In the course of following

* Wade, "State of China, 1850–51" (privately printed).

out these injunctions, Sir John Bowring became convinced that, as he expressed himself in a despatch to Lord Palmerston, "the purpose of the Chinese Government is now, as it ever was, not to invite, not to facilitate, but to impede and resist the access of foreigners. It must, then, ever be borne in mind, in considering the state of our relations with these regions, that the two Governments have objects at heart which are diametrically opposed." This is as true now as it was when it was written in 1852 ; and the view here expressed cannot be too often pressed upon the attention of foreign Governments. Matters began once more to drift into a condition which was dangerous to the maintenance of peace, and in 1854—five years after Keying had promised that Canton should be open to foreigners — Lord Clarendon wrote urging the desirability of "free and unrestricted intercourse with Chinese officials," and of "admission into some of the cities of China, especially Canton."

Acting on the spirit of this despatch Sir John Bowring wrote to the celebrated Yeh, who had in his turn succeeded Sü, to propose an interview at Yeh's official residence, within the walls of the city. To this request Yeh replied that Keying's agreement, never having been acted upon, must be considered to have lapsed; that Sir John Bowring could not therefore be admitted into the city, but that he would be willing to meet him at a warehouse outside the city walls. This attitude runs on all fours with that assumed by the emperor in his relations with the foreign ministers at Peking. Just as forty years ago we were desirous to establish

our just right of admission into the city of Canton, so at the present time, in the interests of peace and friendly relations, we wish our minister to be received within the walls of the imperial palace in conformity with the usual practice of civilized nations. The pavilion outside the precincts of the palace, where the foreign ministers have hitherto been received, is the counterpart of the warehouse where Yeh proposed to meet Sir John Bowring. The motive of this mandarin was precisely that of the emperor and his advisers at the present day. The humiliation of the foreigner in the eyes of his people constitutes the main object to be obtained in both cases, and our true position at Peking will not be gained until, as at Canton, we have free admission, in the person of our minister, within the forbidden precincts.

With that peculiar mixture of want of self-respect and conceit which characterizes Chinese officials, Yeh had no sooner inflicted this insult on Sir John Bowring than he demeaned himself by pleading for help from the outer barbarian. An attitude of sturdy self-reliance on the part of the Chinese might make even their overbearing national conceit almost pardonable, and might redeem from contempt their attitude towards foreigners. But when we find that in all cases of emergency the same hands, which are ever ready to insult us, are held out to plead for aid and protection, the combination of bluster and cringing is contemptible. At the juncture we speak of news reached Canton that a body of rebels were approaching to attack the city. In his memorials to the emperor, Yeh had protested that he was prepared to defend the city

against any force which the barbarians could bring against him. How empty was this boast was shown by the fact that no sooner did an undisciplined rabble threaten the town than he wrote in haste to Sir John Bowring, begging for troops to resist the foe. A further proposal by Sir John Bowring for an interview with this shabby braggart met with a similar rebuff to that received on former occasions. The hopelessness of the diplomatic struggle now became obvious, and Sir John informed his Government that until the city question at Canton was settled there was "little hope of our relations being placed on anything like a satisfactory foundation."

Things were in this condition when a man succeeded to the consulate at Canton who was of all men the best fitted to cope with so defiant a mandarin as Yeh. Sir Harry Parkes had been trained from his youth up in the ways of Orientals, and he was firmly convinced that it was only by a strong hand and firm action that matters could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion at Canton. He had not been long at the consulate when an event occurred which brought matters to a climax. The lorcha *Arrow*, flying the English flag, was boarded by a party of mandarins when lying at anchor off the city. The flag was hauled down, and the crew, with the exception of two men, were made prisoners. Sir Harry Parkes at once wrote to remonstrate with Yeh, who replied, justifying the conduct of his subordinates, and, while sending back nine of the men, refused to liberate three whom he chose to regard as culprits. Further correspondence only proved that Yeh was obstinately determined not to give way, trusting, as the Chinese

have ever done in similar circumstances, to our disinclination to break the peace. The meekness with which we have in our dealings with them submitted to rebuffs and insults justifies this attitude on their part. Ever since the war of 1842 they had been so accustomed to heap indignities and commit outrages upon us that they imagined that nothing would goad us into again drawing the sword. But, though unavenged, these crimes and misdemeanours were not altogether forgotten, and when it was found that the maintenance of friendly relations was plainly impossible, it was determined to assume the offensive. Sir Michael Seymour, the admiral commanding at Hong Kong, without loss of time, led his ships up the Canton river, and, having captured the barrier forts, advanced to the city. This show of force had no effect upon Yeh, and Sir Michael Seymour, in fulfilment of a righteous threat, opened fire on Yeh's yamun and a portion of the fortifications. In two days a breach was effected, and a gate of the city was without difficulty seized and occupied. Meanwhile Yeh, breathing out wrath and defiance against his enemies, stirred up the people to resistance, and gave edge to their zeal by offering a reward of thirty dollars for any Englishman taken, dead or alive. As, most unfortunately, the force at the disposal of Sir Michael Seymour was too small to occupy so large a city, he withdrew to Hong Kong, capturing the Bogue forts on the way. Taking advantage of his retreat, the Chinese, after their kind, set fire to the foreign settlement, and carried off several Europeans, whom they put to death, and whose heads were carried through the villages in

the vicinity of Canton as evidence of the triumph of the native forces over the hated barbarians. The conduct of the Chinese throughout had been so outrageous, and the danger threatening all foreign residents was so imminent, that the representatives of the Western powers ranged themselves cordially on the side of the English in the quarrel. As the United States minister wrote to Yeh, "the fountain of all your difficulties with foreign nations is the unwillingness of China to acknowledge England, France, America, and other great nations of the West as her equals and true friends, and to treat them accordingly. So far as respects this grave matter, the American Government is sensible that the English are in the right, and does choose to co-operate with them."* In response to Sir Michael Seymour's application for more troops men were sent from England, Mauritius, and India; and Lord Elgin was appointed envoy extraordinary. The instructions which he carried out with him were definite as to the demands he should make upon the Chinese. To quote from Lord Clarendon's despatch on the subject (Blue Book on Lord Elgin's Mission, 1857–9), "The demands which you are instructed to make will be: (1) for reparation for injuries to British subjects, and, if the French officers should co-operate with you, for those to French subjects also; (2) for the complete execution at Canton, as well as at the other ports, of the stipulations of the several treaties; (3) compensation to British subjects, and persons entitled to British protection, for losses incurred in consequence of the late disturbances; (4) the assent of the Chinese Government to the

* "A Short History of China," by D. C. Boulger, p. 257.

residence at Peking, or to the occasional visit to that capital, at the option of the British Government, of a minister duly accredited by the queen to the Emperor of China, and the recognition of the right of the British plenipotentiary and chief superintendent of trade to communicate directly in writing with the high officers of the Chinese capital, and to send his communications by messengers of his own selection, such arrangements affording the best means of ensuring the due execution of the existing treaties, and of preventing future misunderstandings; (5) a revision of the treaties with China, with a view to obtaining increased facilities for commerce, such as access to cities on the great rivers, as well as to Chapoo and to other ports on the coast, and also permission to Chinese vessels to resort to Hong Kong, for purposes of trade, from all parts of the Chinese empire without distinction."

Unhappily, while Lord Elgin was on his way to carry out these instructions, the Mutiny broke out in India, and with rare patriotism he diverted a large portion of his force for the assistance of Lord Canning, who was manfully grappling with his countless enemies. This delay made the Chinese jubilant; as, in their ignorance, they imagined that consciousness of weakness was the real cause of the apparent abandonment of the war. As with all weak people, a sense of security invariably produces undue elation with the Chinese, and they now began to renew their taunts and insults. It became necessary, therefore, to show them the baselessness of their confidence; and, with this object, Sir Michael Seymour determined to attack the Chinese fleet, which was stationed in a position of great strength

at Fatshan. In a brilliant engagement, the British sailors gained a decisive victory, and completely destroyed the Chinese force.

On his return to Hong Kong, Lord Elgin, who had gone to Calcutta to consult with Lord Canning as to the force that could be spared for China, made preparations for declaring war. But first he again offered to Yeh the terms upon which he was willing to continue friendly relations. Yeh's answer was discourteous, and amounted only to the proposal that trade should be allowed to follow its old course, and that each side should bear its own expenses. This answer left no further room for negotiation, and Sir Michael Seymour at once proceeded to the assault. Like all Chinese forces, the much-vaunted garrison of Canton offered but a slight show of resistance to determined attack, and the capture of Yeh completed the victory. With the departure of Yeh as a prisoner to Hong Kong, all popular opposition to the English forces disappeared as though by magic. Up to this time the Chinese authorities had never ceased to protest that the real objectors to the presence of foreigners were the people. The result proved, as similar crises have invariably shown, that this assertion was a mere pretence. From the first day of our entrance into the city, the demeanour of the people became friendly and courteous. Single Europeans traversed its length and breadth at all hours of the day and night, without meeting any more molestation than might be encountered in the streets of London. The shop people readily supplied the wants of their new customers, and when requirements arose which were peculiar to Europeans, spontaneous

arrangements were eagerly made to gratify the demand.

This experience is the same as that which we have always met with in China. During the dark days of our relations with that country, between 1842 and 1856, the numerous insults which were offered to Europeans were invariably attributed by the mandarins to the violence of the mobs. Factories were fired; merchants taking their daily exercise were assaulted; boats carrying Englishmen were fired upon; sportsmen were mobbed and driven back to the settlements; and one and all of these outrages were, we were told, the expressions of the hatred of the mob towards us. In reply to one such statement made by the Governor of Canton, Sir John Davis very pertinently asked how it was that while peaceable traders residing at Canton were subjected to these outrages, the lawless foreign smugglers of opium, who had founded settlements outside the consular jurisdiction, and had built themselves comfortable houses, were left free and unmolested. Later on in his despatch he supplied the answer to this question, and showed that the peace and comfort enjoyed by the smugglers at Namoa and Kumsing Mun, were due to the connivance of the local mandarins, who, in return for the forty dollars per chest of opium, which they received as their share of the profits gained by defrauding the revenue, had given orders that the smugglers were not to be interfered with. It was to the interest of these men that the people should live on amicable terms with the foreigners. It was the desire of Yeh and his predecessors that the people should show all hostility to foreigners. In

both cases the mob did as they were bid. And so it has always been in China. When Lord Elgin subsequently demanded our right to have a representative at the Chinese capital, he was assured that the people would not endure it for a moment. We went to Peking, and during the whole of the first winter after the war, the British Legation was occupied by one Englishman, Mr. Adkins, who, with the exception of a few Russians, was the only European living in the capital. No discourtesy was shown him by the inhabitants, nor since then has there been any insult offered to Europeans except at the instigation of the mandarins. Later again, during the riots on the Yang-tsze Kiang, the people were put forward as the chief and only offenders; but from residents on the spot we learn that at Ich'ang, after the consul had warned the mandarins that any further outbreak would be answered by a bombardment from the man-of-war lying off the settlement, a change instantly came over the situation. Up to the evening when this warning was given, the attitude of the people had been menacing and insulting. The very next morning the storm had given way to a complete calm. Inquiry showed that a hastily summoned council of mandarins had met in the night, and had come to the conclusion that they had gone to the length of their tether, and orders were therefore issued that hostility was to be exchanged for peace.

It cannot be too often repeated that, except on rare occasions, riots against foreigners in China are made to order. Our earlier experiences at Canton and elsewhere disprove also the assertions lately put forward by the Chinese Government, that the

people object only to the presence of missionaries, and have never had any quarrel with merchants and traders. The fact being that they attacked merchants until they found that they were too strongly supported to fall an easy prey to violence; and their present hostility to the missionaries would in like manner disappear, if the European Governments had the courage to protect them.

But to return to Lord Elgin. So soon as affairs were settled at Canton, the plenipotentiary went to Shanghai, and notified the imperial Government that he was ready to treat there with any commissioners who might be appointed to meet him. In a discourteous reply the spokesman of the Government stated that no imperial commissioner ever conducted business at Shanghai, and that it was Lord Elgin's duty to return to Canton, and there to await the appointment of a commissioner. Lord Elgin's answer to this impertinence was an advance to the Taku forts, which were even more easily taken than the Canton ramparts; and, without any serious molestation, the fleet advanced up the river to Tientsin.

This rapid advance of the "uncontrollable barbarians" alarmed the emperor's Government not a little. With all haste two high commissioners, Kweiliang and Hwashana, were despatched to meet the English envoy. Their instructions were of the usual Chinese kind. They were to soothe the barbarian, and to promise him just as much as would induce him to sheath his sword. Every proposal made by Lord Elgin was readily agreed to, including the legalization of opium, which was to pay duty at the rate of thirty taels per chest,

with the exception of the demand to have a resident minister at Peking. After much fencing, and long insistence that in case an English minister should be granted an audience with the emperor, he should perform the *kot'ow*, it was agreed that a minister should go to Peking to exchange the ratification of the treaties, and that the question of a permanent residence at the capital should be postponed for the time being. But the Chinese had not yet learnt wisdom, and subsequent events proved that the Tientsin treaty was not regarded seriously by them. The fleet had scarcely left the river when active preparations were made for further strengthening the Taku forts, and at the same time disturbances broke out at Canton. The attitude of the Government, which was foreshadowed by these and similar events, was revealed plainly when, in the following year, Sir Frederick Bruce presented himself before the Taku forts on his way to Peking to exchange the ratifications. On the ships approaching the forts, so heavy and constant a fire was poured upon them that, after suffering considerable loss, they were obliged to draw off to the offing. This act of treachery was quite in harmony with the past and present policy of the Chinese Government. It necessitated, however, on our part a demand for reinforcements, and, pending their arrival, Sir Frederick Bruce took up his quarters at Shanghai.

In the following year a large allied force—for the French had thrown in their lot with us—assembled at Talien Wan (Talien Bay), for the purpose of avenging the accumulated outrages and insults of years. In anticipation of an attack the Taku forts were fully manned and armed, and the

river was staked, to prevent the possibility of ships passing upwards towards Tientsin. The allied commanders, however, disappointed these expectations of the Chinese, and landed their forces at Pehtang, a fortified village about twelve miles north of Taku. Such a manœuvre, not having been dreamt of in Chinese philosophy, took the mandarins completely by surprise. The landing was effected without a shot being fired, and the troops advanced with some difficulty across the muddy plain which separates Pehtang from Taku. In a memorial, which was found among the imperial archives, Sankolinsin, who commanded at Taku, excused his negligence in allowing the troops to land unopposed by informing his imperial master that the English, who were in some degree formidable when fighting on board ship, were powerless on dry land. He had, therefore, decoyed them on shore, and was preparing an attack which was to annihilate them—horse, foot, and dragoons. It is true that he attempted to make good his intention by numerous attacks on our men as they struggled knee-deep through the mud, but on all occasions *his* were the troops which suffered defeat; and after some severe fighting the forts at Taku, both on the north and south sides of the river, were taken. The Chinese defended these fortifications with determined courage, but were unable to resist the onslaught of the allied troops. With the capture of these strongholds, the road to Tientsin was opened, and in spite of the efforts of the governor-general of the province to check the advance of the allies by proposing negotiations, Lord Elgin and Baron Gros, the French minister, pushed on

at once to Tientsin. Here they were met again by Kweiliang, who described himself as appointed by the emperor to arrange the terms of peace.

To any man accustomed to the European code of honour, the idea of meeting a plenipotentiary, whom he had jockeyed and cajoled a year before, would have been, to say the least, embarrassing. But the mental and moral constitutions of the Chinese secure them against any such discomfort, and Kweiliang presented himself before Lord Elgin without a blush. His orders were, he affirmed, to conclude peace as speedily as possible. But August was already past, and by the end of November, as was well known, the almost arctic winter of the north of China seals up the rivers and approaches to the coast. The object of the Chinese was, therefore, so to prolong the negotiations as to catch the allied forces in a trap, by which means it was fondly hoped they might be destroyed by the overwhelming numbers which might be brought against them during the many months in which they would be cut off from the outer world. This purpose became revealed when Kweiliang's negotiations, instead of proceeding swiftly, dragged on with leaden steps, and when an examination of his credentials proved that he was not the possessor of plenipotential powers. The ministers consequently determined to break off their *pourparlers* with this redoubtable strategist, and advance at once to Tungchow, a city in the neighbourhood of Peking. On their arrival at Hosiwu, a village halfway between Tientsin and the capital, they were met by the Prince of I, a nephew of the emperor, who announced that he had been deputed to arrange

terms of peace. These dilatory tactics, however, were now thoroughly discredited, and the march was continued towards Tungchow.

Here happened one of those dastardly deeds of treachery which happily are unknown outside Oriental states. It had been arranged that during the preliminary negotiations to be held at Tungchow, a camping-ground should be assigned to the allied forces in the vicinity of the town. Sir Harry Parkes, Sir Henry Loch, Mr. Bowlby, the *Times* correspondent, and some others, attended by a Sikh escort, rode on to make the final arrangements with the commissioners. After many hours of discussion, a preliminary draft of the terms of peace was drawn out. It was past midnight before the consultation was brought to a close, and at daylight Sir Harry Parkes and Sir Henry Loch rode out towards the English camp to inform Sir Hope Grant of the arrangements they had made, and to point out the ground which was to have been set apart for the camp. They had not advanced far, however, when the movements of large bodies of Chinese troops convinced them that treachery was intended, and that the allied forces were in danger of falling into an ambuscade. Instant measures had to be taken to inform Sir Hope Grant of the danger, and to secure the retreat of those of their party whom they had left at Tungchow. Loch undertook to ride through the Chinese lines to Sir Hope Grant, while Parkes returned to Tungchow with the object of bringing away his companions and escort. Though not without some difficulty, Loch reached the English camp in safety, and, having delivered his message, determined, with that rare chivalry

which belongs to the English race, to return to Tungchow to help in the rescue of his friends. One other man determined to follow him. Captain Brabazon, of the Royal Artillery, insisted on sharing with him his peril, and rode out, as it proved, to death. Two Sikhs accompanied them as escort. They reached Tungchow in safety, and, having joined Parkes, who had collected the scattered members of their party, attempted once more to ride through the Chinese lines under the shelter of a flag of truce. But the national honour, which makes a flag of truce a badge of security among civilized nations, is lightly esteemed by Chinese mandarins, and before they had advanced far they were seized and made prisoners, with the accompaniment of gross indignities and insults. Colonel Walker, Mr. Thompson, and some men of the King's Dragoon Guards, who had been separated from the rest of the party, succeeded in escaping. The remainder were bound and carried in carts to Tungchow, and eventually to Peking. Meanwhile the allied forces attacked the Chinese position, and after a stubborn engagement occupied the ground taken up by the Chinese. At Tungchow commissioners again attempted to check the advance, but they were curtly told that so long as the prisoners, who had been treacherously captured under a flag of truce, remained in captivity there could be no negotiations. On the road between Tungchow and the capital the Chinese made another stand, and were again utterly routed. This was the expiring effort of the forces of the "Son of Heaven." The near approach of the allies created consternation in the imperial palace, and

the course to be pursued by the emperor was eagerly canvassed by his advisers. Some recommended that he should at once start for the imperial hunting-palace at Jehol, in Mongolia, others were of opinion that such a course would have effects disastrous to the dynasty. The emperor, however, was in favour of securing his personal safety at all risks, and, taking the advice of the more faint-hearted of his ministers, he deserted the city.

Meanwhile the allied forces advanced by the eastern face of the city, and, crossing in front of the northern wall, took possession of the Yuen-Ming-Yuen, the summer palace of the emperor. As the troops appeared before the gate of the palace, Prince Kung, who had been deputed by the emperor to watch over the imperial interests, fled out by a back door. That such events could occur showed that the position was serious, and the Chinese felt that it was necessary so to act as to make for peace. They therefore released Sir Harry Parkes, Sir Henry Loch, and a few Sikhs who had survived the tortures under which the other prisoners had succumbed. As a practical denunciation of the treacherous capture of these men, and of the barbarities to which they had been subjected, Lord Elgin determined to give the Yuen-Ming-Yuen to the flames. This was done, and while the destruction of the palace impressed on the Chinese the heinousness of their offence, it brought home to their consciousness the hopelessness of further resistance. With some reluctance the north-eastern gate of the city was handed over to the allied commanders; and Prince Kung, who had been deputed by the emperor to act for him,

exchanged the ratifications of the Treaty of 1858 with the envoys of England and France. The main political points on which this treaty differed from that negotiated by Sir Henry Pottinger, in 1842, were articles eight, nine, eleven, twelve, and eighteen. By the first of these it was declared that "the Christian religion, as professed by Protestants and Roman Catholics, inculcates the practice of virtue, and teaches man to do as he would be done by. Persons teaching it or professing it, therefore, shall alike be entitled to the protection of the Chinese authorities; nor shall any such, peaceably pursuing their calling, and not offending against the laws, be persecuted or interfered with." Article nine provided that "British subjects are authorized to travel, for pleasure or purposes of trade, to all parts of the interior, under passports which shall be issued by their consuls, and countersigned by the local authorities." By article eleven it was "agreed that British subjects may frequent the cities and ports of Newchwang, Têngchow, Formosa, Swatow, and Kiungchow, in the island of Hainan." Article twelve provided that "British subjects, whether at the ports or other places, desiring to build or open houses, warehouses, churches, hospitals, or burial-grounds, shall make their agreement for the land or buildings they require, at the rates prevailing among the people, equitably, and without exaction on either side." Article eighteen laid it down that "the Chinese authorities shall at all times afford the fullest protection to the persons and property of British subjects, whenever these shall have been subjected to insults or violence. In all cases of incendiarism or robbery,

the local authorities shall at once take the necessary steps for the recovery of the stolen property, the suppression of disorder, and the arrest of the guilty parties, whom they shall punish according to law." By the same treaty the importation of opium, which had formerly been smuggled into the country, was legalized. So soon as the ratification had been exchanged, and a convention, made necessary by the treachery of the Government, had been signed, Lord Elgin returned to England, leaving his brother, Sir Frederick Bruce, as plenipotentiary.

CHAPTER XV.

FOREIGN RELATIONS.

WHILE the war with the allies had been going on, the central provinces had been devastated by a rebellion which shook the empire to its foundations. The T'aip'ing rebels, who had begun as a small band in Kwangsi, had gathered sufficient strength to spread over wide areas, to capture cities, and even to establish themselves in the ancient capital of Nanking. The defeats of the imperial forces at Taku and before Peking had doubtless contributed to these successes by weakening the authority of the Government. This accumulation of disasters caused deep anxiety to the emperor's advisers, and in casting about for help in their emergency, they had sense enough to recognize that if they could secure the support of the "barbarians" who had defeated their armies and routed their best troops, they might fairly hope to overcome the rabble which constituted the rebel army. In order to secure this object they adopted a friendly attitude towards the foreign powers, and throughout the whole empire, with the exception of those provinces under the rule of the T'aip'ings, the period was one of peace and good will. Surprised and gratified by this sudden change of front, the European ministers

met applications for help with every desire to grant it. British instructors were appointed to drill the native troops; gunnery sergeants taught the untutored native artillerymen to use the European weapons now placed at their disposal; a fleet of gunboats was ordered from England to defend the coast and to patrol the large rivers; the English general commanding at Shanghai was instructed to repel all attacks on that city; and General Gordon was ultimately appointed to command the "ever-victorious army" in the campaign against the T'aip'ings. The history of the suppression of the rebellion, mainly effected by the energy and skill of Gordon, is too well known to need repeating here. In the summer of 1864 Nanking was taken, and the T'ienwang, the leader of the rebellion, was captured and executed. This last decisive victory was immediately gained by the troops of Tsêngkwofan, the father of the Marquis Tsêng, who for some years represented China at the court of St. James's. With the disappearance of this great danger, disappeared also the necessity for foreign help. The conciliatory attitude of the Chinese had therefore played its part, and symptoms soon showed themselves in the provinces which marked a change of policy, and the withdrawal of the restraining hand which had made for peace. Like all the former treaties, Lord Elgin's had been agreed to by the Chinese with the mental reservation that they would fulfil as little of it as circumstances allowed. Under the provisions of the article quoted in the preceding chapter (12), a Mr. Hudson Taylor visited Yangchow, in 1868, with the intention of establishing a mission in that city. It was admitted

that he and his friends had lived peaceably and quietly with the people, and, as a matter of fact, the only charges which it was possible to bring against them were the palpably groundless accusations, with which we are now so familiar, of having killed children for the purpose of using their eyes and hearts for medicinal purposes. Instead of attempting to allay the excitement produced by these charges, the mandarins and literati did all that lay in their power to excite the mob against the missionaries. As at the ports on the Yang-tsze-Kiang in 1891, so, at Yangchow, the passions of the people were successfully worked up. The missionaries were cruelly assaulted, their houses were burnt down, and they were driven from the city. During the same year anti-foreign riots broke out in the island of Formosa, and in 1869 the Rev. James Williamson, of the London Mission, was murdered near Tientsin. The perpetrators of this crime were not arrested, and as must always be the case in so unregenerate a country as China, one result of thus offering the other cheek to the smiter was to encourage the spirit which gave rise to the fierce anti-foreign outbreak at Tientsin a few months later.

For some time disquieting rumours had been in circulation foreshadowing an attack upon foreigners. The usual reports of children having been kidnapped were passing from mouth to mouth, and placards were posted on the walls denouncing the missionaries and all their ways. These instigations to riot were brought to the notice of the Chinese authorities, who, as usual, when they have nothing to gain by remaining on friendly terms with foreigners, took

no steps to allay the excitement. At last, on the 21st of June, the storm burst, and the mob marched to their work of destruction. The mission establishments in the city were the first objects of attack. There ten sisters of mercy were murdered with every circumstance of revolting brutality. Two French ladies, and a young Russian bride, who had been married but two days previously, shared the same fate; while the French consul, his clerk, and two Russian merchants were all at the same time cruelly done to death. That such an event should have occurred at a city in the metropolitan province, and within seventy miles of the capital, was a crying disgrace to the Chinese nation. Sir Thomas Wade, who was the British minister at Peking, acted promptly and vigorously, but it was not until considerable pressure had been brought to bear, that the Chinese Government could be induced to take the steps which it was their bounden duty at first to have adopted. In a despatch addressed by Sir Thomas Wade to Prince Kung on the subject, he wrote, "As to the atrocities committed, although there is no doubt about the popular exasperation, there is the strongest reason to doubt that the destruction of the religious establishments, and the murder of their occupants, were exclusively the work of the ignorant multitude. The chief actors in the affair are stated to have been the fire brigades, and the banded villains known as the Hunsing Tzŭ. These were ready for the attack, and as soon as the gongs sounded fell on, provided with deadly weapons. They were reinforced by soldiers and yamun followers, and conspicuously directed by a man with the title of Titu (major-general), the ex-

rebel Chên Kuojui . . . yet after more than seventy days' delay what has been done towards the satisfaction of justice? Some few of the lower class of criminals have been arrested, the more important of these not having been discoverable until their names and their whereabouts were supplied by the French legation. The guilty magistrates were left for twenty days after the massacre at their posts, their energies being devoted throughout that period not to the detection of persons guilty of a share in the crime, but to the examination under torture of unfortunate Christians, from whom it was hoped that confessions might be extorted in such a form as to tell favourably for their persecutors. . . . The common people, seeing no punishment inflicted on any one, persuaded themselves that the massacre was a meritorious act. Songs are sung in honour of it, and paintings of it are circulated representing officials as approving spectators of the crime. . . . I must add, in conclusion, what it will give your imperial highness little pleasure to read, as little certainly as to myself to write; but the occasion requires that I should speak out. It is very generally believed that, although your imperial highness and the wiser of your colleagues are opposed to any policy that would involve a rupture with foreign powers, there are other leading men in China whose dream is the expulsion of the barbarian, and who, if they were not the immediate instigators of the movement of the 21st of June, have heartily approved its atrocities; have exerted themselves to prevent the punishment of the guilty parties, official and non-official; and are even now urging on the central Government the expediency of directing a

like murderous enterprise against all foreigners that may be found on Chinese ground."

After lengthy negotiations the Chinese were so far brought to recognize the heinousness of the crime that they consented to the degradation and banishment of the prefect and magistrate of the city; to the execution of sixteen principal assassins; the banishment of others, and the publication of a strongly worded imperial edict, condemning the massacre. It is hard to say how far the first of these conditions was carried out. It has before happened that mandarins within whose jurisdictions offences against foreigners have been committed, have been ostensibly degraded, but in reality moved to other and higher posts. The decapitation of the sixteen murderers was certainly carried out. On this subject Mr. Consul Lay reported to Sir Thomas Wade, "that about two hundred police and soldiers escorted them (the criminals) from the gaol to the magistrates' court-room, where they were marshalled, sixteen in all. None of them would kneel to be bound, when ordered to do so. They were all dressed in what is everywhere stated to be a Government present, viz. new silk clothes, and wore on their feet shoes of elegant manufacture. Their hair was dressed after the female fashion, in various modes; and ornaments, such as those seen on the heads of Chinese ladies, were stuck in their head-dresses." In confirmation of this report, Dr. Williamson, a missionary at Tientsin, states that "the Government paid a large monetary compensation to the families of the men who were executed, permitted them to be feasted during the preceding night, afterwards decapitated in grand robes, said

to be a present from the Government, and buried with honours. Then the two chief mandarins, who were to have been banished to Manchuria, were allowed to return to their own homes, while the greatest criminal of all, the general who urged the rabble on, was never touched."

So ended this infamous business, which was begun in violence and ended in deceit and evasion. But the Government was evidently determined to take advantage of the horror with which the act was regarded by Europeans, to circumscribe still further the activity of the missionaries. With this object in view, they proposed eight articles for the regulation of all missionary undertakings in China. The real intention which this document was supposed to serve was made sufficiently plain by the proposals which it contained. Briefly stated, these were: that foreign orphanages should be abolished; that women should not be allowed to enter the churches, nor sisters of charity to live in China; that missionaries must conform to the laws and customs of China, and must submit themselves to the authority of the Chinese magistrates; that since the individuals who commit disorders ordinarily belong to the lowest class of the people, accusations, in case of riots, must not be brought against the literati; and that before a man be permitted to become a Christian, he must be examined as to whether he had undergone any sentence or committed any crime. These propositions were so palpably hostile to foreigners generally that the foreign ministers unanimously declined to entertain them.

The attitude assumed by the Chinese Government towards foreigners in these and other matters

continued to be as unsatisfactory as ever, and the memory of the Tientsin massacre was still fresh in the minds of all when a murder of a different kind, but entailing equal official complicity, was committed in the province of Yun-nan. It had long been the desire of the Indian authorities to establish communications between Burmah and Western China. In pursuance of this purpose, it was arranged, after negotiation with the Tsungli Yamun, that Colonel Brown should visit Yun-nan by the recognized trade route, which connects Bhamo and Yun-nan-fu, and should be met by a consular officer, to act as interpreter for him with the Chinese authorities. Mr. Margary, a young officer of great promise, and one who, from his ability and *savoir faire*, was well qualified for the undertaking, was chosen for the duty. From Shanghai to Bhamo he travelled with perfect safety, and on all sides met with courtesy and assistance. On returning, however, with Colonel Brown towards the Yun-nan frontier, he was met with the report that the mountain tribes were assembling to bar the progress of the expedition. This attitude of the people seemed so contrary to that assumed by them in the course of his journey westward, that he rode ahead of his companions to make inquiries in person as to the truth of the rumour. Outwardly all seemed peaceable. But mischief was intended, and after he had been allowed to advance as far as Manwyne, on the Chinese frontier, he was set upon in an unguarded moment and brutally murdered. This crime, from an international point of view, was as serious as any which had yet been perpetrated. An English

official, travelling on a special mission under the protection of a passport specially granted by the Chinese Government, he was, in a marked degree, under the protection of the authorities. How far they acted up to their trust may be judged from the fact that, as stated by Dr. Wells Williams, the American minister at Peking, "The weight of evidence obtained at Yun-nan-fu went to prove that the repulse of the British party was countenanced, if not planned, by the governor-general, and carried into effect with the cognizance of Brigadier Li." * Though immediate representations were made to the Tsungli Yamun, so soon as the news of the occurrence reached Peking, nine days were allowed to elapse before the yamun applied for the decree which was needed to instruct the provincial authorities to investigate the particulars of the crime.

As usual, the Chinese on this occasion met the representations of Sir Thomas Wade cavalierly; and it was only when they found that he was determined that justice should be done that they took any steps to collect evidence on the spot. The result of a long and wide experience of Chinese diplomacy had convinced Sir T. Wade of the necessity that English representatives should be present to watch the progress of the investigations. But in this, as in everything else, he was met by opposition on the part of the Chinese Government. His position, however, was so strong that the Chinese yielded, and Messrs. Grosvenor, Davenport, and Baber were commissioned to undertake the duty. Nothing could be more unsatisfactory than the conduct of the Chinese officials.

* "Middle Kingdom," vol. ii. p. 724.

With cynical shamelessness, they combined to confuse the issues, and ultimately threw the responsibility of the crime on a few border savages, whom they seized, and whose lives were offered in expiation of the murder. Knowing perfectly well that the real criminals were those placed in high positions, Sir T. Wade declined to allow these men to be executed, and made it plain to the Tsungli Yamun that in his view the Chinese Government was morally responsible for the crime. In a strongly worded but temperate despatch to Prince Kung, he enumerated the various murders which had recently disgraced the soil of China, and added, "If the relations of China with other Governments had been such as are maintained between all other Governments in treaty relations with China, if the central Government had been at any pains to make it manifest to the empire that it was not ashamed of intercourse with foreign powers, and desired rather to cultivate than repel them, the Titu of Kweichow would not have taken on himself to direct the murder of the Abbé Niel; the sub-prefect of Weisi Ting would not have laid hands on Mr. Cooper; the prefect and magistrate of Tientsin, instead of encouraging a belief that children were being kidnapped by the sisters of charity, would have taken steps to disabuse the people of a notion so false and ridiculous; lastly, the Momein authorities would not have moved troops to overwhelm a small party of gentlemen of whose entrance into Chinese territory the Chinese Government had been duly advised."

So hopeless was the attitude adopted by the Tsungli Yamun, that Sir Thomas Wade left Peking,

and continued the negotiations at Chefoo, with Li Hung-chang, who had followed him thither to represent the Chinese Government. In a despatch addressed to Lord Derby at this time, Sir T. Wade stated it as his opinion that the anti-foreign feeling in the country was, on the part of a large majority of the educated class, as violent as ever it had been, and that the leading members of the central Government were in a great degree anti-foreign, and as bigoted opponents to all foreign intercourse as any people in the empire. In the face, however, of this extremely unsatisfactory state of things, Sir T. Wade, by the exercise of tolerant patience and skill, concluded a convention which again placed the two Governments on terms of friendship. By the articles of this instrument it was agreed that an indemnity of two hundred thousand taels should be paid on account of the Yun-nan murders and of other outrages upon foreigners; that an envoy should immediately proceed to England bearing an imperial letter of apology for the outrage; that the ports of Ich'ang, Wuhu, Wênchow, Pakhoi, and later Ch'ung K'ing, should be opened to foreign trade; and that so soon as steamers should succeed in ascending the rapids which separate the upper from the lower waters of the Yang-tsze Kiang, the river should be considered open to steamer traffic. Coupled with these conditions was appended an agreement that imperial instructions should be issued to the governors-general, directing them to accord every protection to foreigners within their jurisdictions.

The signatures of the plenipotentiaries to this convention were scarcely dry, when the Chinese

began to whittle away the conditions to which they had agreed. It must be confessed that, in this instance, they were encouraged by the British merchants, who showed a curious hesitation in acting on the permission to navigate the waters of the upper Yang-tsze. Meanwhile, however, the Chinese were raising the usual objections to any advantage being taken of the concession. The boatmen, they said, fearful lest the use of steamers should rob them of their occupation, would rise in revolt. They exaggerated the dangers of the rapids, and even expressed fears that the monkeys which haunt the gorges might endanger the lives of the steamers' crews by throwing down rocks and stones on the decks. These, and perhaps other arguments, so far prevailed on Sir John Walsham, Sir T. Wade's successor at Peking, that he agreed to give up the hard-fought-for right.

Another privilege that had been gained during the negotiations at Chefoo was contained in the following clause:—"Her Majesty's Government, having it in contemplation to send a mission of exploration next year by way of Peking through Kansuh and Kokonor, or by way of Szech'uan, to Tibet, and thence to India, the Tsungli Yamun, having due regard to the circumstances, will, when the time arrives, issue the necessary passports, and will address letters to the high provincial authorities and to the resident in Tibet. If the mission should not be sent by these routes, but should be proceeding across the Indian frontier to Tibet, the Tsungli Yamun, on receipt of a communication to that effect from the British minister, will write to the Chinese resident in Tibet; and the resident,

with due regard to the circumstances, will send officers to take due care of the mission, and passports for the mission will be issued by the Tsungli Yamun, that its passage be not obstructed."

A dispute which arose between Nepaul and Tibet, eight years after the conclusion of this convention, furnished a fitting opportunity for carrying out the programme foreshadowed in this article. The difficulty in question, affecting as it did the British frontier, attracted the attention of the Indian Government, and Mr. Macaulay was despatched to investigate the true position of affairs on the spot. In the case of disputes between Tibet and her south-western neighbours, a favourite policy of the Chinese, who are the dominating factor in all matters relating to Tibet, is hermetically to seal up the passes leading into those countries. Such was the condition of things when Mr. Macaulay arrived in Nepaul. In strict accord with former experiences, the Tibetan authorities constantly affirmed that they were acting under orders from Peking. The matter having been referred to Cæsar, Macaulay felt that to Cæsar he must go, and, leaving the blockaded and blockading forces face to face, he took ship to Peking. At that capital he met with the opposition which is normal in face of all projects suggested by foreigners. Li Hung-chang was, or professed to be, favourable to the expedition; but the ministers of the Tsungli Yamun raised difficulties. After their well-known manner, they affirmed that the real opposition lay with the Tibetans, who were, they asserted, so deadly opposed to the intrusion of foreigners, that the Chinese Government felt doubtful of its power to protect the expedition. On this point

Mr. Macaulay was able to correct their impressions, and to assure them that, in his communications with the people on the frontier of Nepaul, he had found every disposition on their part to show hospitality to Europeans. Finding their flank turned in this way, the Chinese yielded the point, and promised both to issue the necessary passports, and to give such instructions to the resident at Lhasa as should secure the mission from all hazard, as well as promote the object which it had in view. With a curious maladroitness, it was arranged that the expedition should not start until the following spring. In dealing with Orientals it should be a cardinal rule to act instantly on any privilege accorded. The delay in despatching the mission at once strengthened the hands of the Chinese—those past-masters in the art of creating difficulties. Even when the appointed time arrived the mission, the members of which had assembled at Darjeeling, delayed their going.

The inevitable difficulties had arisen, and, being in a more than usually yielding mood, the pretences and subterfuges of the Chinese were listened to, instead of being brushed aside. It is doubtful whether the composition of the mission had been judiciously arranged. Its professed aim was to open up commercial relations with Tibet; but though there were diplomatists, naturalists, and travellers in abundance, there was no one who by any pretence could be called an authority on trading matters, added to which an escort of three hundred soldiers converted an ostensibly mercantile expedition into a small army. The Chinese Government professed to be terror-stricken at the anger which

the advent of such a force would be likely to create among the Tibetans, and the resident at Lhasa was instructed to stir up a sufficient opposition among the people to make this apparent. The trickery answered its purpose, and our minister in China signed a convention at Peking in the following terms:—"Inasmuch as inquiry into the circumstances, by the Chinese Government, has shown the existence of many obstacles to the mission to Tibet provided for in the separate article in the Chefoo agreement, England consents to countermand the mission forthwith. With regard to the desire of the British Government to consider arrangements for frontier trade between India and Tibet, it will be the duty of the Chinese Government, after careful inquiry into the circumstances, to adopt measures to exhort and encourage the people with a view to the promotion and development of trade. Should it be practicable, the Chinese Government shall then proceed carefully to consider trade regulations; but if insuperable obstacles should be found to exist, the British Government will not press the matter unduly."

Nowhere is the old proverb, "Give a man an inch, and he will take an ell," more invariably true than at Peking. A political weather prophet of the least acumen might readily have foretold that the result of having thus yielded to the Chinese would be that they would advance a claim in excess of the bargain. Almost simultaneously with the arrival of the news of the conclusion of this ill-timed convention, came intelligence that the Tibetan troops had advanced into British Sikhim, and had erected forts across the road along which we had fondly

hoped to see traders coming and going. Already a certain amount of traffic had grown up, as a result of recent treaties. But the Chinese now changed all that. The broadcloth, piece goods, knives, and hardware, of which the Tibetans had shown a growing appreciation, were stopped even within our own frontier; while the wool, musk, and other native products, which had begun to find their way from the Tibetan markets into Sikhim were peremptorily blocked. It has been suggested that the prime motive which actuates the Chinese in preventing our negotiations with Tibet is the fear lest the sale of tea from the neighbouring gardens of Darjeeling should interfere with the monopoly possessed by the Chinese Government of the brick tea from distant Szech'uan. But whether this be so or not, it is certain that the Chinese are as determined as ever to prevent our getting the least commercial foothold in Tibet.

The advance of what was virtually a Chinese force into British Sikhim, was however, more than even we could stand at the hands of China, and some regiments were sent up to clear the road. This they accomplished without much difficulty; but the Chinese, in pursuance of their obstructive policy, proceeded to raise a question as to the delimitation of the frontier. After much discussion it was arranged that the Peking Government should appoint a commissioner to settle the matter with our authorities on the spot. The commissioner appointed was a mandarin holding office in the remote province of Kuldja. With extreme deliberation this official travelled across Central Asia, and was so exhausted by the journey that, on arriving in Tibet, he

required some months' rest to recover from the effects of the road. At last he appeared at Simla, where another prolonged stay was necessary for his health. Finally he arrived at Calcutta, and, not having a diplomatic leg to stand upon, signed a convention formally agreeing to the frontier which we had originally proposed. Meanwhile five years had elapsed. Envoys had constantly passed backwards and forwards between Peking and Calcutta, with no other object than the waste of time; and, as was said of the proceedings against Warren Hastings, while the judges walked the trial stood still. Meanwhile we had done nothing, lest any move on our part should be regarded as an unfriendly act to an allied power!

One condition of the Chefoo convention was, however, carried out, at least ostensibly. Orders were certainly issued to the governors-general in the terms proposed, but experience has lessened the value of these bravely worded documents by teaching us that secret instructions of an opposite tenor occasionally accompany the public documents. All that can be said in this particular instance is that, if no such counterblast were circulated, the governors-general showed most marked disobedience to the imperial will. From time to time local riots against foreigners broke out in different parts of the country, and in 1884 a violent disturbance occurred in the province of Canton. At this time Chang Chihtung, the present governor-general of Hukwang, where occurred the riots of 1891, held the same office in the two Kwang provinces, one being that popularly known as the province of Canton. By an ill chance an admiral P'êng, who

was a rabid opponent of foreigners, was appointed to the same locality. The moral attitude of this last officer was sufficiently defined by the statement he made that China would not hold herself responsible for any losses due to the destruction by popular violence of buildings belonging to foreigners. This hint was enough. Within a short time eighteen Protestant churches were either destroyed or pillaged; "whilst an almost clean sweep was made of the Roman Catholic chapels." Little or nothing was done to punish the rioters; and P'êng, the prime mover in the affair, instead of being degraded, received until his death in 1890 the full light of the imperial countenance.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUTRAGES ON MISSIONARIES.

So matters went on for the next few years. Missionaries were attacked, native Christians were maltreated, and chapels were burnt with pertinacious regularity, without entailing any, or, if any, only slight, punishments on the offenders. This immunity from all evil consequences partly prompted, no doubt, the outbreak which occurred on the shores of the Yang-tsze Kiang in 1891. In the beginning of that year a number of placards inciting the people to outrage against Europeans were issued in the province of Hunan—a province which has always been notorious for its bigoted hatred of foreigners, and which has hitherto successfully resisted the entrance of the despised "barbarians" within its borders. These placards were specially directed against Christianity. It so happens that the term used by the Roman Catholics for God, which is *T'ien Chu*, meaning "the Lord of Heaven," is almost identical in sound with words meaning "the heavenly pig." In all the placards, therefore, the First and Second Persons of the Trinity are represented as swine, and both foreigners and native Christians, all of whom are shown as wearing green hats, indicative of their

being the most abandoned of mankind, are shown as kneeling in adoration before these animals.

Other illustrations exhibit the missionaries and their followers perpetrating the several atrocities which are popularly attributed to them. We see them gouging out the eyes of their converts, cutting out parts of their intestines, and mutilating infants. By another play upon words, Yangjên, a term for foreigners, is taken to stand for a homophonous expression signifying "goat-men;" and, whether as goats or as men, the Europeans are described on the same placards as being subjected to every form of indignity. They are being tortured, beheaded, torn to pieces by dogs, driven off the coast by Chinese soldiers, struck dead by the god of lightning, and devoured by the natives.

The appearance of these disgusting pictures was at once brought to the notice of the native authorities, who, as usual, paid no attention to the warning. In due course the common rumours were set afloat that children were being kidnapped and vivisected for medicinal purposes, and in regular sequence riots broke out at Wuhu, Wuhsueh, Tanyang, Wusieh, Chingkwan, Yangwu, and Kiangyen. At Wuhsueh one missionary and one officer in the maritime customs, both being British subjects, were killed. At the other places, the missionary establishments were burnt down, and the missionaries and their converts were subjected to outrage and violence. With the imperturbable assurance which belongs to Chinese officialdom, the news of these outrages no sooner reached England than the Chinese minister received instructions from his Government to report to the Foreign Office that the

Tsungli Yamun was determined to make a rigorous inquiry into the riot, and was "desirous that the Foreign Office should instruct Sir J. Walsham to show no undue impatience or feeling with regard to the matter." Unhappily, this most palpable *ruse* was partly successful, and the Marquis of Salisbury telegraphed to Sir John Walsham that "the Yamun are apprehensive lest the excitement might be revived and increased, rather than allayed, by further executions. . . . They are now, apparently, feeling alive to the gravity of the occurrences that have taken place, and I am inclined to accept their assurances in this respect as sufficient, if you are satisfied that the Chinese Government are in earnest." As time went on events proved that, as usual, the Chinese Government was not in earnest; and the foreign ministers at Peking found themselves under the necessity of signing a joint protocol on the subject, in which they stated that "under these circumstances, the undersigned cannot but declare that no faith can be put in the assurances of the Chinese Government." In reporting the charges brought against the mandarins in the protocol in question, Sir John Walsham added, "These charges remain unaltered, and the repeated assertions of Chinese agents in foreign countries that the Chinese Government has acted with good faith and energy can be disproved by facts, and are as plausible as the assurances that native officials might now be safely entrusted with the protection of foreigners."

In harmony with the attitude thus assumed by the Chinese, the question of compensation for the lives lost and property destroyed in the riots, was allowed to drag its slow length along for weeks, and

even for months; the only mandarin who was degraded, though afterwards reinstated by the insistence of the foreign ministers, was the official who risked his life to save English women and children from the fury of the mob; and the prime mover in the agitation was left at liberty. On several of the placards, to which reference has been made above, the surname Chow occurred on the banners and flags borne by the soldiers who are represented as massacring foreigners. This symbol had reference to a certain Chow Han, a retired official residing in Hunan. As time went on, evidence accumulated to show that this man was the author and promoter of the outrages. One proclamation, which was extensively circulated on the shores of the Yang-tsze, was actually signed by him. In it he wrote, "The Roman Catholics deceive the wives and daughters of the Chinese. Their crime is as great as Heaven. Both gods and men are enraged. If we do not beat the drum and attack them, how can we put a stop to the portentous books of their corrupt religion?" Copies of the evidence collected against this arch-agitator were forwarded to Peking, and presented to the Tsungli Yamun by Sir J. Walsham. At first the Chinese ministers were inclined to pooh-pooh the whole testimony, but by perseverance they were at length induced to issue a commission to seize the culprit. The appointment of a commission is the favourite resort of the Chinese Government when they wish "not to do it;" and in this case the end was fully gained. The commission went to Hunan, but found, or professed to find, that the accused had disappeared. They made inquiries, however, concerning him,

and gravely reported to the throne that he was a mad, wild creature, whose actions were not to be regarded seriously. Thus far the Chinese Government would go, but no further, and Chow Han at the present moment enjoys full liberty, and ample means to revive the agitation at any moment when it may be convenient to do so.

Since then various minor outrages have been committed on outlying missionary stations; and the same chronic disorder is likely to continue unless a strong hand is kept on the officials of the Tsungli Yamun. Happily, a new minister has gone to Peking, and it is to be hoped that Mr. O'Conor will find himself in a position to give all necessary support to his countrymen, even though they may be missionaries, residing in China.

The above review of our relations with China is sufficient to demonstrate that there is still something to be desired in the conduct of our diplomacy with the Chinese. The time has gone by when it is necessary to discuss the right or the wrong of our being in China at all. We are there, and by treaty the Chinese are bound to deal justly and honourably with us. That they have not done so is only too plain, and the question arises whether some blame for this failure does not rest with us. It may be taken for granted that, like all Asiatics, the Chinese will give concessions to foreigners only on compulsion, and will act up to their engagements only under the same impulse. They are in possession of a vast empire which produces everything which is necessary for their comfort and well-being. Their markets are crowded with goods and wares; their inland waters teem

with vessels laden with the products of distant provinces, and the people are ruled by a system of government which has lasted for four and twenty centuries, and which, in spite of egregious faults in administration, metes out a rough kind of justice to them. As a nation, they are self-contained, and ask for nothing from foreign countries except to be left alone. Foreigners have, therefore, always stood at a distinct disadvantage with regard to them. They have been suppliants throughout, and have stood cap in hand at the portals of China begging for the privilege of commercial relations with her. The first settlers, under the auspices of the East India Company, submitted to every species of political degradation and insult, in order to secure the export of the teas and silks of China to the markets of Europe, and the recollection of this attitude has encouraged the Chinese, in spite of two wars, to regard us much as their fathers regarded the settlers in the factories at Canton. Even at the present time, though our position is not by any means what it was, there still remains a certain leaven of the old deferential air about us.

So long as the conduct of affairs rested mainly in the hands of the consuls and naval authorities at the treaty ports, the provincial mandarins were compelled to act more or less in harmony with their treaty obligations, the inevitable gunboat exercising a wholesome terror over them. With the establishment of the foreign legations at Peking began a new chapter of misfortunes, and the contrast between the former condition of things and that which now prevails, cannot be better exemplified than by a comparison of the results of the

action taken at Yangchow after the riot in 1868, with those obtained in consequence of the outbreaks on the Yang-tsze in 1891. Although the English legation had been already established at Peking, Mr. Medhurst, the English consul at Shanghai, was sent to Yangchow with a naval force to demand redress on the spot. Full compensation for the destruction of the mission property was readily given, and the most satisfactory relations have existed between the missionaries and the natives of the city since that time. What happened on the Yang-tsze in 1891 has been recounted above, and rumours are already afloat of a revival of the anti-foreign crusade.

The desire to establish relations with the central Government was a very natural one, but the mistake lay in the supposition that the Tsungli Yamun could be treated on the same terms as the Quai d'Orsay, or the Foreign Office at Berlin. For the effective transaction of international affairs, a certain modicum of good faith on both sides is essential. That modicum has never been shown by the Chinese Government. After fifteen years' experience in the capital, Sir T. Wade reported to the Foreign Office that the native statesmen were as anti-foreign as they ever had been; and only two years ago the foreign ministers at Peking declared in conclave that "no faith could be put in the assurances of the Chinese Government." Martially weak, the Chinese Government falls back on the weapons at its disposal. What poison is to the snake, what the claws are to a cat, what the ink is to the cuttle-fish, craft and dissimulation are to the Chinese. When pitted against

officials who are so armed, Englishmen, who happily are prisoners of their word, must be always at a disadvantage. In face of such disingenuous statesmen as those of the Tsungli Yamun, our true policy is to demand the execution of our treaty rights to the full letter of the law, and to ignore the excuses and evasions with which they invariably attempt to avoid carrying out their engagements. It is only by persistently pursuing this policy that we can hope to avoid the constant friction which arises from the present weakness of our policy and from the bad faith of the Chinese Government.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE AUDIENCE QUESTION.

THE audience question has occupied a prominent place in recent negotiations with China, and probably many people are surprised that so ordinary a matter should have been so constantly a subject of debate. But Chinese ways are not our ways, and a ceremony which among civilized nations is regarded as a common act of courtesy between sovereigns, has in China become complicated by the absurd pretensions of the Government to a superiority over all the world. Like a spoilt heir who has been brought up in secluded surroundings, the Chinese have long been surfeited with dominion and glory in the midst of neighbouring tribes, who stand on a lower level of civilization than that which they occupy. In the long history of the empire such an event as an ambassador being received as representing a sovereign on terms of equality with the emperor, has never been known; and this pretension to supremacy, which materially contributes to the maintenance of the power which the empire possesses, enters into the life of the nation and is, to a great extent, a matter of life and death in its present unregenerate state. The proposal, therefore, that the foreign ministers resident in Peking should

be received in the manner common in civilized countries, has been persistently combated by the mandarins. It must be confessed that precedent has been in their favour. The Portuguese and Dutch ambassadors, who visited Peking in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, all submitted to the degradation of appearing as envoys of tributaries at the court of the Son of Heaven.

From an account given of the mission of Alexander Metello de Sousa Menezes, in 1727, we learn that at the audience granted to him by the Emperor Yungch'êng, "his excellency entered the western gates [of the reception hall], ascended the steps of the throne, and, kneeling, presented his credentials; he then rose, went out by the same way, and in front of the middle door that was open the ambassador and retinue performed the usual act of obedience," *i.e.* knelt and struck their heads on the ground nine times. About a century earlier a Dutch embassy was treated with even greater contempt. The ambassador and his staff met "with a vile reception and degrading treatment. They were required to humiliate themselves at least thirty different times; at each of which they were obliged, on their knees, to knock their heads nine times against the ground, which," adds Barrow, in his "Travels in China," "Mr. Van Braams, in his journal, very coolly calls performing the salute of honour."

Lord Macartney, in 1793, had the honour of being the first who refused to submit to this degrading ceremony. Happily at this time a sovereign was on the throne who had sufficient independence to sanction a departure from the ordinary routine, and

who had sufficient good sense to do honour to the self-respect of the ambassador. On arriving at Peking Lord Macartney found that the Emperor K'ienlung was at his hunting-palace at Jehol (whither, in 1860, the Emperor Hienfêng fled before the allied forces of England and France). By K'ienlung's invitation, Lord Macartney proceeded to Jehol, and was there received by him in a magnificent tent in the palace garden. In accordance with Eastern custom, the audience was granted at sunrise, and further, in accordance with practice, the ambassador was required to be in attendance some hours before the arrival of the emperor. This delay was sufficiently discourteous, but it was an improvement on the treatment to which the Dutch ambassador had been subjected in the preceding century, when the unfortunate envoy was left sitting "all night in the open air, and upon the blue stones till morning." Soon after daylight the sound of music announced the emperor's approach, and without further delay his majesty took his seat upon a throne set up in the tent. On all sides he was surrounded by princes of the blood and the highest officers of state, some of whom conducted the ambassador from the tent in which he had awaited the emperor's arrival to the imperial presence.

"The ambassador, pursuant to instructions received from the president of ceremonies, held a large magnificent square gold box, embellished with jewels, containing his majesty's letter to the emperor, between both hands, raised above his head, and, mounting the steps which lead to the throne, and bending upon one knee, presented the box with a suitable laconic address, to his imperial

majesty, who received it graciously with his own hands, put it by his side and represented the satisfaction he felt at the testimony which his Britannic majesty gave to him of his esteem and good will in sending him an embassy, with a letter, and rare presents; that he, on his part, entertained sentiments of the same kind towards the sovereign of Great Britain, and hoped that harmony would always be maintained among their respective subjects." At a feast which was subsequently given to Lord Macartney and the chief Tartar tributaries, the emperor marked his regard for the English ambassador by sending him several dishes from his own table, and by presenting to him and his staff cups of wine with his own hand.

The reception thus accorded to Lord Macartney showed a marked advance towards the customs of civilized nations. The *kot'ow* was not insisted upon, and though the ambassador bent one knee in presenting his credentials, the audience, taken as a whole, was as satisfactory as could have been expected. To the Emperor K'ienlung succeeded Kia K'ing, who was as bigoted and narrow-minded as his father had been liberal and enlightened. To him Lord Amherst was accredited in 1816, and from the first opening of negotiations it became at once obvious that the new emperor was determined to return from the position taken up by his predecessor to the preposterous pretensions of former times. Even before Lord Amherst's arrival at Peking he was met by the asseverations of the commissioners deputed to meet him that he could only be admitted into the imperial presence by consenting to perform what Van Braams described

as "the salute of honour." This he positively declined to do, and the commissioners, who had distinct orders to arrange an audience, were at their wits' end how to reconcile the imperial commands with the ambassador's attitude. The symbol used to express on paper the word "deceit" is made up, as has been said, of parts signifying "a woman's weapon." In China "a man's weapon" would be equally applicable, and in this particular instance the commissioners determined to use this well-worn arm to rid themselves of the difficulty. In later communications with Lord Amherst they agreed to waive the point, and assured him that all that would be demanded of him would be such a genuflection as had been performed by Lord Macartney. To the emperor, however, they reported that the ambassador was ready to obey his commands, and they even drew up a document in which the whole ceremony was minutely described, and in which the ambassador and suite were made to perform the *kot'ow* on several occasions. In pursuance of his arrangement with these double-faced gentlemen, Lord Amherst went to Yuen-Ming-Yuen, where the emperor was then residing. It was, however, plainly impossible for the commissioners to admit him into the imperial presence, since they knew that it would be beyond their power to make him perform the *kot'ow*, and were equally aware that the absence of the act would bring down the wrath of the emperor upon them. The manœuvre which they adopted in this difficulty is interesting. They persuaded the emperor to order the ambassador into his presence the instant he arrived at the palace. As the journey had been long and tedious,

and the ambassador was way-worn and weary, he excused himself from obeying this very discourteous command, as the commissioners expected he would do, on the ground of fatigue. They then prompted the emperor to dismiss him from the court, and the luckless ambassador was obliged to return with his mission unfulfilled.

In accordance with civilized usage, the residence of the foreign ministers at Peking would naturally entail their being received in audience by the emperor; and if Lord Elgin, when in command of Peking, had insisted upon the fugitive Emperor Hienfêng returning to the capital to receive him in audience, no further difficulties on the subject would have arisen. But the opportunity was allowed to lapse, and a true solution of the difficulty has still to be arrived at. The death of Hienfêng, in 1861, and the long minority of his successor T'ungchi, postponed any further consideration of the matter until 1873. In that year the emperor, having attained his majority, and having signalized the event by taking to himself three wives, accepted the reins of power from the dowager empresses, who had governed the empire during the past twelve years. The time had thus arrived when the audience question had again to be considered; and, after much negotiation with the Tsungli Yamun, it was arranged that the foreign ministers should be collectively granted a reception at such time and place as the emperor might determine. The Chinese authorities, recognizing that the *kot'ow* was no longer in question, directed all their efforts towards persuading the ministers to bow the knee after the precedent set by Lord Macartney. But

against this proposition the ministers showed a determined front, and the Chinese, being compelled to give way on this point also, turned their attention to obtaining some advantages in return for the concessions accorded.

The Dutch and Portuguese ministers, who had bowed to the ground in the presence of the Son of Heaven, had been received in the imperial audience-chamber within the palace; and Lord Macartney, who had bent the knee, had been allowed to place his credentials in the hands of the emperor. As the present generation of ministers had refused either to *koť ow* or genuflect, it became necessary to emphasize the superiority of the emperor over the sovereigns whom they represented, by refusing them admittance within the gates of the palace. A pavilion known as the Tzŭ-Kuang Ko was, therefore, chosen for the ceremony. According to the best authorities, this building is that in which the Mongol princes and Corean ambassadors are feasted at the New Year. It is here, also, that Manchu military exercises are performed, and wrestling matches are held for the amusement of the emperor. The edifice was, therefore, not one in which ministers of sovereigns on an equality with the emperor would naturally have been received. The native guide-books describe it as the place where "New Year receptions are granted to the outer tribes," and the choice of it was doubtless intended by the mandarins to be a set-off against the concessions they had made. But it was also part of the arrangement that the ministers should not give their credentials into the hands of the emperor, but should deposit them on a table set in the hall for

the purpose; and that they should then be presented by Prince Kung to the emperor. On the day appointed (June 29) the ministers were early astir, as the emperor had fixed the audience at the very inconvenient hour of between six and seven in the morning. The place of audience being close to the Roman Catholic cathedral and mission house, the five representatives of Western powers—England, France, America, Russia, and the Netherlands—met there to attire themselves in costumes befitting the august occasion. Thence they were escorted to the Shih-ying Kung, where confectionery, tea, and Chinese wine from the emperor's buttery were offered them. Here they were kept waiting for more than an hour, and were then led to a tent pitched on the west side of the pavilion of audience. They might have reasonably hoped that this move meant the immediate arrival of the emperor. But if this was their expectation they were disappointed, and it was only after a further delay of at least an hour and a half that the representative of Japan, who, being an ambassador, was introduced separately, was summoned to the imperial presence. The five European representatives were next introduced, and were led by a door on the west side of the pavilion into the central aisle of the hall. As they faced the northern end, where the emperor was seated on his throne, they bowed in concert. They then "advanced a few paces and bowed again, then advanced a few paces further, bowing again, and halted before a long yellow table about halfway up the hall." The emperor, who was surrounded by his advisers and courtiers, was, it was observed, seated cross-legged according to the Manchu

custom. When all had taken up their appointed positions, the minister of Russia, as doyen of the corps, read aloud an address in French, which was made intelligible to the emperor by an interpreter, who delivered a version in Chinese for his benefit. "As soon as the address was delivered we laid our letters of credence upon the table. The emperor made a slight bow of acknowledgment, and the Prince of Kung, falling upon both knees at the foot of the throne, his majesty appeared to speak to him —I say appeared, because no sound reached my ears. We had been told, however, that the emperor would speak in Manchu, and that the prince would interpret. Accordingly, as soon as his highness rose, he descended the steps, and informed us that his majesty declared that the letters of credence had been received. Then, returning to his place, he again fell upon his knees, and the emperor, having again spoken to him in a low tone, he again descended the steps, and, coming up to us, informed us that his majesty trusted that our respective rulers were in good health, and expressed a hope that foreign affairs might all be satisfactorily arranged between the foreign ministers and the Tsungli Yamun. This closed the audience, which may have lasted a little more than five minutes. We then all withdrew in the usual fashion *à reculons*, and bowing."*

Sir Thomas Wade, and probably the other ministers, recognized that this reception constituted a marked departure from precedent, although they were fully alive to the shortcomings it manifested.

* "Blue Book." China. No. I. (1874), Sir Thomas Wade to Earl Granville.

To begin with, the imperial decree granting the audience was worded in a dictatorial tone, which was, to say the least, discourteous. "The Tsungli Yamun," so runs this document, "having presented a memorial to the effect that the foreign ministers residing in Peking have implored us to grant an audience that they may deliver letters from their Governments, we command that the foreign ministers residing in Peking, who have brought letters from their Governments, be accorded audience. Respect this." The long periods of waiting in the Shih-ying Kung, and afterwards in the tent, were doubtless intended to mark the condescension of the emperor in granting the audience, and, together with the very perfunctory ceremony in the hall, were indications which forbade the cherishing of any high hopes as to the effects likely to be produced by the reception. With a self-complacency which almost amounted to an impertinence, a statesman of the Tsungli Yamun informed one of the foreign ministers after the audience that the princes who waited on the emperor had been surprised and pleased at the demeanour of himself and his colleagues. Such a remark illustrates the supercilious contempt with which the Chinese dignitaries regard foreigners generally, and emphasizes an ignorance which would be remarkable considering that the foreign legations had then been established in Peking for twelve years, if we did not know how entirely the courtiers hold themselves aloof from the foreign ministers.

It had been proposed that an annual reception should be given to the foreign plenipotentiaries, but the sudden death of the emperor from small-pox put an end to this scheme. Another long minority

succeeded, and it was not until the assumption of the ruling power by the present emperor, in 1891, that a reception was again held. The decree published in the *Peking Gazette* announcing this event was laconic, but at least had the advantage over that published on the previous occasion, in that the derogatory expressions therein used were omitted. The decree was dated March 4, and ran thus: "At 11.30 to-morrow the emperor will receive in audience at the Tzŭ-Kuang Ko all the nations." The ceremony on this occasion was almost identical with that which took place in 1873. The intervening eighteen years had not taught the Chinese anything as regards foreigners, and their attitude then and now was and is as anti-foreign as ever it has been. On his arrival at Peking in the present year (1893), Mr. O'Conor requested an audience, which was granted him with a change of venue. Instead of the Tzŭ-Kuang Ko, the Chêng-Kuang Tien, a temple which stands outside the palace enclosure, was chosen for the ceremony. Here again the same forms were followed, and the event will probably be as barren of results as were those of 1873 and 1891.

So matters stand at present, and the question suggests itself, "Of what use have these audiences been?" In civilized countries the reception of a minister by the sovereign to whose court he is accredited is a testimony of the friendship of that monarch towards his royal master. It also facilitates negotiations between the two countries. It serves, therefore, a substantially useful purpose. In China, however, neither of these ends can possibly be attained by such receptions as those accorded to

the foreign ministers. The emperor, so far as it is possible to judge, is in the hands of his advisers, who, as Sir Thomas Wade told us some years ago, are as bitterly anti-foreign as ever, and in whose word, the foreign ministers solemnly declared, in 1891, that "no faith could be put." As to facilitating negotiations between China and foreign countries, the wildest enthusiasts could not hope for any such result. It may be said that this is but the beginning of things, and that we have no right to expect any great and rapid change in the attitude of the Chinese court towards us. This would be plausible if in the thirty years during which the legations have been established in Peking there had been shown any advance of friendliness. On no occasion could any such change be better manifested than at an imperial reception, but time has made no change in the manner in which our ministers are received; for it is impossible to see any sign of a progressive movement in the exchange of the Chêng-Kuang Tien for the Tzŭ-Kuang Ko as an audience-chamber. The fact is that we are too much inclined to pursue here, as in our other dealings with China, the cap-in-hand attitude. We have humbly implored, to use the emperor's own words, to be admitted into the imperial presence, and we have reaped our reward.

The policy which our experiences in China have shown to be the right one in such matters as audiences with the emperor, is sufficiently obvious. Our minister should be instructed to tell the Tsungli Yamun that though he should naturally consider it an honour to be received by the emperor in accordance with the etiquette commonly observed among

civilized nations, he should have no desire, so long as the reception fell short of such requirements, to appear in the imperial presence. It may be argued that any temple or hall which is good enough for the emperor should be good enough for a minister of a foreign state. But in China such reasoning is inapplicable. In that land of rites and ceremonies every form carries with it a distinct meaning, and no observance is without an *arrière pensée*. An audience granted to the foreign ministers in a pavilion consecrated to "the New Year receptions of the outer tribes" sets its seal on the ministers as representing states on a par with Tibet and the Mongolian dependencies. The Foreign Offices of Europe, with the exception of that of St. Petersburg, are so little accustomed to Asiatic modes of thought that these considerations are beyond their ken. Forms which in the eyes of Chinamen are of vital importance are regarded by them as insignificant details, and they are apt to consider as trivial and ceremonious that which really involves the weighty matter of national honour.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FOREIGN TRADE WITH CHINA.

No one would dispute the right of the Chinese to be called a nation of shopkeepers. From the earliest dawn of history they carried on, as their records tell us, a constant trade with the neighbouring states; and with the growth of power they built up, with laudable shrewdness and industry, that system of commerce which excited the admiration of Marco Polo, and which at the present day strikes with astonishment the visitors to the treaty ports. On all sides evidences of flourishing trade and accumulated wealth are observable. The rivers and canals are crowded with junks carrying the merchandise of Europe and of the distant provinces of the empire to marts where these may be exchanged for the products of other localities. Centuries before the first ships from Europe reached the shores of far Cathay, the merchants of China had gained for themselves throughout Eastern and Central Asia a well-earned reputation for commercial enterprise and ability. The arrival of foreigners at Canton added but a drop to the mighty stream of native trade. The cottons and goods of Manchester were, it is true, taken in exchange for a portion of the tea and silk of the

central and southern provinces, but the addition to the existing commerce was, as it still is, comparatively trifling. This may appear anomalous when we recollect that the total value of the foreign trade with China has reached, as the returns for the year 1892 attest, to the very considerable amount of 237,684,723 taels, or, reckoning the tael at its present value, to about fifty millions sterling. The growth of this vast trade has been rapid and continuous. In 1845 its value was not more than six millions sterling. Without deviation this sum has steadily increased until it has now reached its present large proportions. But though this is so, there are considerations which considerably diminish the value of the trade to us as a nation. Up to the year 1862 to be a China merchant was to be a rich man. Fifteen years in a Hong at Shanghai or Canton was time enough to accumulate a fortune which even to English ears sounded colossal. Men went out in the prime of youth and returned loaded with wealth before their complexions had had time to become yellowed by an undue residence in the East. In almost every county in England and Scotland retired China merchants were to be found, who supported liberally every national sport and contributed with lavish generosity to the charities and hospitals of the district. But such days are past and gone. Fortune was kind to those who retired before the very serious competition arose which now wrests from the British merchant a large proportion of the gains which used to flow into his pockets. In the halcyon days before the date spoken of, the trade was almost entirely in the hands of Englishmen, who fixed the market prices, and bought and sold

with leisurely ease. Now, however, competition from the continent of Europe, the United States of America, China itself, and later still, Japan, has become keen enough to reduce to very small proportions the profits which used to be gained by the older generations of merchants. An additional cause for anxiety is also found in the fact that of late years the trade of Great Britain with China has not increased in the same proportion as that of the countries of the continent of Europe.

In 1880 the value of the direct trade with Great Britain was 49,705,207 taels, while in 1892 it amounted only to 39,346,399 taels. This falling off in the direct trade was aggravated by the fact that whereas in the first-named year the value of the tael was about five shillings and fourpence, in 1892 it had fallen to four shillings and fourpence halfpenny. It is true that the trade of the colony of Hong Kong with China increased by leaps and by bounds during the same period. In round figures the advance was from 46,000,000 taels to 110,000,000 taels. This is accounted for by the change which has come over the conduct of trade. From being merely a place of passage, Hong Kong has become, in course of time, a place for the transhipment of goods. It is there that cargoes brought from Europe and America are transhipped into smaller steamers which distribute them among the treaty ports, and it is to Hong Kong that the products collected at the ports are severally sent to be transhipped into ocean-going steamers for Western lands. This system applies not only to the British trade, but to the European and American trades. The great increase which has accrued, therefore, to

Hong Kong must not be, by any means, credited altogether to our account. Part of it must certainly go to swell the returns of the trade of other countries with China. In 1880 the value of the Continental trade with China was 14,157,975 taels, and in 1892 this amount had increased to 22,294,682 taels; while at the corresponding dates the trade of the United States with China stood at 10,311,442 taels and 16,846,555 taels respectively. It will be seen, therefore, that, while our direct trade with China has decreased, the direct trade with Europe and the United States has increased. It is probable, however, that our commerce may be credited with twenty-five per cent. of the Hong Kong trade, and that therefore the result shows some increase, though not in proportion to that acquired by Europe and America. It is unfortunate, also, that while the total volume of foreign trade with China has increased, the profits to be derived from it have considerably diminished; and it is an open secret that British firms have for some years been working at only a very small margin of advantage.

In the report for 1891, issued by the Chinese imperial customs, this unfortunate condition of affairs is insisted on. "Although," it is stated, "more merchandise, to the value of twenty million taels, entered and left China than in the preceding year, the past twelvemonth cannot be recorded as one of commercial prosperity. Capital invested in the trade has yielded meagre returns. . . . Most banks had to reduce their rate of interest, and in some cases earned nothing on their capital, while two of the largest old-established firms suspended pay-

ment." In the report of the following year it is further said, "The instability of silver and the constant fall in sterling exchange . . . has had a paralyzing and narrowing effect on the foreign trade of China with gold-currency countries. The strain produced by the depreciation of silver proved disastrous to one Eastern Exchange Bank, which went into liquidation; another found its capital so diminished that reconstruction had to be resorted to; and others returned no dividends on their large capital employed in the East. Interest on loans was raised, and credit became contracted; business had to be conducted with the utmost care, and caused much suspense to the merchants."

This position of affairs still continues, and there appears no gleam of light to brighten the hopes of the traders who are struggling with fortune at the ports of China. It is said that the redoubtable Li Hung-chang, recognizing that the force China might bring to bear under arms would be no argument against the trained battalions of Europe, has, with the object of ousting foreigners, pursued a policy of encouraging his countrymen to compete with them in the fields of commerce and manufactures. It was affirmed years ago by one of the ministers of the Tsungli Yamun that the best means of getting rid of foreign opium was to grow the poppy in China. On the same principle Li Hung-chang and other like-minded mandarins have subsidized steamship companies, and have built factories for the production of the cloths and goods which have hitherto been supplied from Europe. At the present time the China Merchants' Steamship Company is a formidable competitor in the carrying trade between

the treaty ports, and possesses the not inconsiderable advantage of being at liberty to trade at any desirable point along the coast. At Lanchow Fu, the capital of Kansuh, a factory has been established for spinning and weaving into cloth Mongolian wool, while at Shanghai a cotton-spinning factory has, until recently, when it was burnt to the ground, been for some years in full work. The effects of these institutions have already made their mark on the foreign trade of China, and the probability is that before long a very considerable shrinkage will be observed in the quantities of English cotton goods imported.

One of the most remarkable features in the trade of recent years has been the rapidly growing demand for cotton yarn. In 1878 the value of the yarn imported was 2,500,000 taels. In 1887 this amount had multiplied sixfold, and five years later yarn constituted one-sixth of the value of the total foreign imports into China. This means that there has been a corresponding increase in the hand-looms throughout the country—a circumstance which is partly due to the comparative cheapness of native labour, but also to the fact that the cloth thus manufactured is stronger and better suited to the requirements of the people than the ordinary English material. At first the yarn brought to China was almost entirely English, but of late years Bombay has successfully competed with Manchester, and of the 22,059,409 taels' worth placed on the Chinese markets in 1892, 21,096,464 taels' worth was brought from India. Of late a new competitor has appeared in the field in the shape of Japan, where machinery of the most

approved pattern has been set up, and where cheap labour and a plentiful supply of the raw material has placed the manufacturer at a distinct advantage. The Shanghai mills also had, before their destruction, begun to supply yarn to the native weavers, and in the latest return from the Chungk'ing custom-house yarn so manufactured occupies a not unworthy place.

Without taking a pessimistic view of our trade with China, it is only reasonable to expect that the English supply of cotton manufactured goods will gradually diminish, and it behoves us, therefore, to look to other goods for the maintenance of our import trade. Woollen goods have never been very largely used by the Chinese. Their costliness has been a bar to their adoption by the people, and with the decline of both opium and cotton imports manufacturers will do well to cast about for other wares to correct the balance. To enable them to do this efficiently it is necessary that we should know more of the wants of the people and of the products of the country than we do at present. That we should be able to arrive at this knowledge it is important that our points of contact with the people should be increased in number. Of late years two fresh markets have been opened at Chungk'ing, and Mêngtzŭ near the frontier of Yun-nan and Tonquin, with satisfactory results. At both these places trade has developed, and has during recent times more than doubled. It is a proof of how very imperfectly foreign wares have permeated into the country, that at these places the people have shown a greedy appreciation of foreign miscellaneous articles offered them for

sale. At Chungk'ing a brisk trade, which shows no symptoms of diminution, has sprung up, in aniline dyes, brass buttons, clocks and watches, medicines, and needles; while wool from the plains of Tibet has found there a fresh market, in consequence of the new opportunities now supplied of transport to the eastern provinces.

Another article of commerce, the popularity of which has outstripped the wildest imagination of the importers, is kerosene oil, and the reason of this is not far to seek. A Chinese house after nightfall never emerges from a state of semi-darkness. Wretched tallow candles, and oil lamps which consist only of floating wicks in cups of oil, are all the illuminants which the ingenuity of the people has been able to invent. A kerosene lamp in the dull atmosphere of a Chinese house at eventide is like an electric lamp competing with rush-lights. The cheapness of the oil also is in its favour, and the economically minded Chinaman, finding that he can enjoy a brilliant light at a very moderate cost, eagerly possesses himself of the luxury. In 1863, 210,000 gallons were imported into China, and in the year 1892 no fewer than 49,348,477 gallons were placed in the market. With the increase of treaty ports, the business done in these and other goods naturally increases, and, in the interest of commerce, it is to be hoped that the petition which was not long since presented to the Foreign Office by the Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce, for the opening of the west river in the Canton province, will meet with success.

It is an old saying, that one half of the world does not know how the other half lives, and it

may fairly be said that very few people outside the small circle of China merchants, know the nature of the miscellaneous goods which are annually imported and exported into and from China. One of the last objects which would suggest themselves as likely to meet with a ready sale in the China markets would be flints. And yet in 1891 these stones were imported to the value of 31,233 taels. The uses to which flints are turned by the Chinese are, firstly, in the manufacture of glass, and, secondly, for "strike-lights" in tinder-boxes. The appreciation of flints indicates an improvement in the manufacturing power of the people. Formerly, it was customary to import broken glass, which was converted into panes at Canton and elsewhere. This branch of trade has now, however, almost entirely ceased, and has been supplanted by the importation of sheet glass, or by the manufacture of the ware from the more elementary standpoint of raw materials. The quaint and very artistic forms into which the Chinese arrange feathers, keep up a constant demand for those of birds possessing brilliant plumage. Kingfishers' feathers, with those of the heron and pheasant, find a ready sale, and are used with infinite skill to adorn the theatrical stage, and to add beauty to the ornaments, fans, and toys in which Chinese ladies delight. Peacocks' feathers are mainly reserved to add dignity to the hats of those mandarins whom the emperor especially delights to honour.

A belief that the skins of rhinoceroses form a good and healthy tonic, gives a value to the tough hides of these beasts in the Chinese markets, where the horns also are readily competed for at prices

rising to three hundred dollars apiece. Much virtue is said to belong to rhinoceros' horn. As an antidote to poisons, its efficacy is believed to be unrivalled, but it does not depend for its popularity on this chimerical property alone. As a material for drinking-cups it is much sought after, and yields itself readily to the skilful designs of artificers, who delight to adorn it with all sorts of quaint and emblematic devices. The very elementary knowledge of natural history possessed by the Chinese tempts them to believe that those animal substances which belong to strong and courageous creatures, or which are in themselves hard and unyielding, must necessarily contain and be capable of imparting vigour. On this quaint principle warriors have been known to devour the hearts of their bravest foes, that they may inherit the courage which they have admired and dreaded; and in the same way the horns of deer and of other cornigerous animals are commonly used as medicines to stimulate the nerves, and to counteract the natural timidity of the Chinese nation.

A usual ingredient in doctors' prescriptions is a material known as dragon's blood, and no doubt this is believed by the majority of patients to be procured from those mythical animals. In face of this well-established superstition, it sounds prosaic to explain that dragon's blood is really a dry, resinous substance, which covers the roots of a sort of rattan, which grows in Sumatra, and may possibly serve some medical purpose, though as yet it has not found its way into the pharmacopœia of Europe. Among the miscellaneous articles commonly imported, clocks and watches occupy a

prominent place. During 1892, 104,803 of these most useful ornaments were sold at the treaty ports. Chinamen have long learned to make clocks, but the native supply is not equal to the demand, and the main supply comes from abroad. For the most part, however, even at the present day, Chinamen are dependent on the sun for their knowledge of the time of day. Happily for them, punctuality in all matters of daily life is foreign to their social system, and the division of the day into twelve periods, measuring two hours apiece, supplies with sufficient minuteness all that is required for fixing appointments and keeping engagements in that leisurely land. In some cities clepsydras are used to mark the progress of time, and occasionally joss-sticks, which are carefully divided by the astronomical board into periods corresponding to the hours, are kept burning for the same purpose. The advance from these rough contrivances to clocks and watches is as great as that from the native candles to kerosene lamps.

Matches and needles are other items which help to make up the list of imports. In 1891, 4,894,611 gross of the first, and 3,214,258 mille of the last were imported. On their first introduction, matches came as a revelation to the Chinese, who were accustomed to nothing more convenient than the flint and steel, and the even more primitive method of getting fire by friction. "Spontaneous fire" is the epithet they apply to them, and until lately they have looked to Europe only for the supply of lucifer matches. Now, however, the Japanese, who are treading on our heels, and even surpassing us in many inventions, are beginning to manufacture

them for the China markets; and even native factories have been established to supply the rapidly increasing demand. It is probably on the ground of their having become to some extent a home product, that the Taotai of Chungk'ing has entered on a course of action with regard to the importation of matches into the province of Szech'uan, which is likely to bring these goods into diplomatic prominence. With a total obliviousness of treaty obligations, this official has lately issued a notification to the effect that he has sold the right of importing and manufacturing matches, so far as Szech'uan is concerned, to a native firm at Chungk'ing, thus establishing a monopoly which, if left uninterfered with, would doubtless prove eminently remunerative to both parties in the bargain. It cannot, however, be supposed that they will be allowed to reap their ill-gotten gains so soon as the facts become known.

By an inversion of origin, umbrellas, which were first brought to Europe from the East, are now, by the whirligig of time, reversing their course. The paper umbrellas of the Chinese, which have so striking and picturesque an effect, are not such useful protections against the rain as against the sun, and natives are beginning to find out that the cotton and silk umbrellas of European make are more useful and convenient, even though they be a little dearer. Four hundred and thirty-three thousand and ninety-eight umbrellas were laid down at the treaty ports last year, and the probability is that they were not only sold but used at those semi-Europeanized places. The people in the interior are not yet ripe for any such change of fashion, and a native gentleman who ventured out under the cover of a

European umbrella in an inland district, would probably rue the day that he adopted so progressive an article. The fall from the large figures above quoted to the value of the soap imported argues ill for the cleanliness of the nation. Only 184,634 taels' worth of this substance were imported, and this is the more to be regretted since it had not to face competition with anything beyond a very imperfect material of the kind prepared in the country. A preparation of soda is all that is ever used by the majority of Chinamen, and though it has some of the qualities of soap, the best cleansing properties are not among them. It has to be confessed that this halfpenny worth of bread to the intolerable deal of sack imported into China, represents the perverted native ideas on that virtue which is next to godliness. In the north of the country, where the cold in winter is extreme, neither soap nor water is much patronized so long as the snow is on the ground; and it is not difficult to divine the period of the winter by the stage of the darkening hue which accumulates on the complexions of the people.

From the Straits Settlements and the Melanesian Islands come medicines and culinary delicacies, by routes which have been traversed by junks bearing similar burdens for many hundreds of years. Sharks' fins from the Indian Archipelago, beches-de-mer from the Islands of the Pacific, and birds'-nests from islands as far south as the latitude of Australia, are carried in constant procession to the coasts of China to supply the tables of Chinese gourmets. To European tastes, these delicacies are somewhat insipid, but Chinamen profess to value them for

their refined flavour, and for the stimulating qualities with which they are credited. The beche-de-mer is a slug-like creature, of an average length of about a foot, and when captured is smoked and dried for the market. The different kinds of beche-de-mer which are caught correspond to the prices they command. The inferior black specimens may be bought for two or more dollars a picul, while the best white kind fetches as much as eighty dollars. The nests from which the celebrated birds'-nest soup of the Chinese is manufactured, are the homes of a species of swallow, which derives from the sea-weed on which it feeds the glutinous saliva which forms its nest and supplies the aroma and nutriment which are so prized. Chinese epicures value the soup both as a delicacy and as a very nutritive food. It is illustrative of the weakening effects of the domestic lives led by wealthy Chinamen, that they so greedily seek after things in heaven above, in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, to reinvigorate their debilitated constitutions. Ginseng, which is of all other medicines the most strengthening, according to Chinese ideas, is so precious in their sight that the best roots are reserved for the emperor's own consumption, and the price of even inferior qualities is so exorbitant that only wealthy men can afford the luxury. Less opulent people are obliged to content themselves with beche-de-mer, birds'-nest soup, deers' horns, rhinoceros' hides, and even the flesh of the frozen mammoths from Northern Siberia.

By far the largest import into China is included under the head of cotton and cotton goods. The total value of this item in the year 1891 amounted to

53,290,200 taels, of which sum 15,693,081 taels represented the grey and white shirtings brought from England. Next to cotton comes the vexed article of opium. To the anti-opiumists the Customs' returns will bring a welcome balm of consolation. Of late years there has been a decided falling off in the quantity brought to China. During the year 1892, 83,235 piculs were imported as against 96,985 in 1876, 107,970 in 1879, 96,839 in 1880, and 86,629 in 1890. The opponents of the traffic would, however, be living in a fool's paradise if they flattered themselves that this decline was due to the diminution of the habit. The real factor which is driving the Indian opium out of the field is the opium grown and manufactured in China itself. Long before opium was placed upon the tariff, large quantities were grown in the country in spite of the occasional proclamations which were issued against the cultivation of the poppy. No claim to virtue can be advanced by the issuers of these manifestoes. Their official purity is much on a par with the credit gained by viceroys for cashiering incompetent juniors. In both cases, speaking generally, the advantage to be derived from the act is the only motive which induces them to perform it. The viceroy who cashiers a subordinate does so with a full conviction that the dismissed official will pay him a heavy fee to be reinstated; and the mandarin who fulminates against the growth of the poppy looks forward with equal confidence to the reception of a large bribe for overlooking the fields white to the harvest which surround his yamun. In many provinces the poppy occupies by far the largest area of any crop, and it was reckoned,

even as far back as 1872, that 100,000 piculs of opium, or 17,000 more than were imported into China last year, were produced in Szech'uan alone. Of late years this quantity has largely increased, and since the native product is much cheaper than the foreign drug, it is likely to take its place with all smokers who cannot afford to pay for the extra flavour of the imported article.

In the same interesting return furnished by the imperial customs, numerous statistics are given relative to the prevalence of the habit of smoking, and the weight of opinion on the part of those engaged in the investigation leans to the side of those who do not take so black a view of the practice as that advanced by the anti-opiumists. It is difficult to suppose that the two or three mace weight of opium—a mace being the tenth of a tael—which is the common allowance for an average smoker, can produce any very deleterious effect. But this is not the place to discuss this very difficult question. The commissioners who lately visited India may be expected to speak authoritatively on it before long, and until they have pronounced it is as well to abstain from controversy on the subject.

It has been repeatedly urged by the anti-foreign party in China that one result of foreign trade is to drain the country of silver, and a certain justification is found for this argument in the custom-house returns. The value of the exports from China has never equalled that of the imports. In 1885 the relative figures stood—imports, 88,175,413 taels; and exports, 64,884,879 taels. In 1892 these figures were respectively 135,101,198

and 102,583,525. Were the whole empire thrown open to foreigners, and its resources fully developed, this balance would doubtless be redressed. It is beyond question that under wise superintendence the country would possess infinite possibilities of production. But, as matters now stand, apart from the two engrossing items of tea and silk, the exports can only be classed as miscellaneous. Under one temptation Chinamen seem always destined to fall. The desire to make money, honestly if they can, but at all hazards to make money, invariably induces them by degrees to allow their goods to fall below the required standard. So long as no competition interferes with their holding the field, this habit, though immoral, is not necessarily destructive. And when China was the one tea-producing country in the world, the fact that the growers were in the habit of palming off on their customers old leaves for new ones was tolerated with a certain amount of grumbling. But there is no alterative like competition, and the appearance of Ceylon, India, and Assam as rivals to China, has given dissatisfied customers an excuse for indulging in the stronger and more pungent teas of those countries.

For some years the effect of this rivalry has been apparent in the lessening demand for China teas. It is the old story of the opium trade over again. Just as the Chinese by growing the poppy are causing a decline in the Indian traffic, so we, who are the largest consumers of tea, are now learning to grow on our own soil supplies which render us almost independent of the China leaf. No doubt a considerable trade in China teas will still be carried on for many years; but it appears probable that

the trade reached its climax in 1886, since which time there has been a gradual falling off. From the 4713 lbs. of tea which were brought to Europe in 1678 to the 2,217,295 piculs exported from China in 1886, the growth in the trade was continuous. In 1800, 20,000,000 lbs. reached our shores, and in spite of wars and rumours of wars, the trade advanced steadily until it reached the large figures quoted above. Since then there has been a marked decline, and in 1892 the figures stood at only 1,622,681 piculs, valued at 25,983,500 taels.

The danger of this position of the China tea trade has been fully recognized by Sir Robert Hart, the head of the custom service, who has urged on the Peking Government, in an exhaustive and able paper, the necessity of improving the modes of cultivating the shrub, and of preparing the leaf for the market. But Chinese tea-growers have suffered heavy losses of late, and the majority of them are not in a position to undertake expensive reforms, or to forego profits which may be secured even at the expense of discounting the gains of the future. It is curious to observe that a far greater interest is taken by the authorities in the cultivation of silk than in the growth of tea. Frequent memorials have of late appeared in the *Peking Gazette*, urging the importance of subsidizing the cultivation of the mulberry tree in silk-producing districts, but not a word is spoken of the advisability of supporting the other great product of China. This is to be accounted for by the fact that a certain amount of sentiment is attached to the manufacture of silk. We are told, in the native histories, that the empresses of antiquity set an example to the house-

wives of China by rearing silkworms and reeling off their silken produce. The area in which silk is produced extends over the greater part of the empire, the exception being the northern provinces, where the cold is too severe either for the growth of the mulberry or for the existence of the worm. Within this wide area the conditions of the cultivation vary considerably. In the central and southern provinces the mulberry is indigenous, while in Shantung and the neighbouring provinces a kind of oak supplies the place of its less hardy congener. With every variation of food there occurs a change in the material produced; and, roughly speaking, the silk may be classed as that produced from the wild mulberry, the grafted mulberry, and the kind of oak tree spoken of above. The best kind is that produced from worms fed upon the grafted tree; while that grown in Shantung is of a coarse, thick substance, which lacks the smooth, glossy surface of the Nanking stuffs. But between these extremes there exists an infinite variety of materials, and even the four hundred different samples sent from Shanghai to the Vienna Exhibition did not exhaust the diverse products of the country. The following is a list of the values of the different kinds which were exported in 1892:—

	Taels.
Silk—Raw, white	23,810,567
,, yellow	2,032,252
,, wild	1,479,225
Reeled from Dupons	869
Cocoons'	414,455
Refuse	2,603,745
Piece goods	6,899,906
Shantung Pongees	471,944
Products, unclassed	579,167
	38,292,130

It will thus be seen that the value of the two items of tea and silk amounted in 1892 to 64,275,630 taels, or considerably more than half the value of the total exports.

One of the largest items, apart from these two main products, is straw braid from Northern China. This most useful class of goods found a place in the market after the opening of the port of Tientsin (1860), and rapidly commended itself to the foreign merchant. From very small beginnings it quickly grew in volume, and in 1877, 25,930 piculs were exported from the northern ports. This quantity increased to 80,290 piculs, valued at 2,008,775 taels, in 1890. In 1892 there was a slight increase on these figures, but just as in tea, so in this braid, the Chinese producers have grown careless of the quality which they present to their customers. The inevitable result of this course has followed, and at the present time the elasticity which characterized the earlier movements of the trade has ceased to be observable.

Wool from the plains of Mongolia and the table-lands of Tibet, and tobacco from the southern provinces of the empire, form considerable items in the list of exports, together amounting in value to 2,620,164 taels. Arsenic also is produced in considerable quantities in the country, and although the home consumption is larger than might be expected, there is yet a surplus left for the benefit of foreigners. The native farmers use it with a freedom which suggests the possibility of danger, in protecting growing plants, and especially rice plants, from the insects which infest them. As an ingredient in the pastil which is used to smoke out mosquitoes, and

in the manufacture of the tobacco which is smoked in hubble-bubble pipes, it is largely employed. To the tobacco it is said to impart a pungent flavour and an invigorating tonic. Its property as a strengthening medicine is highly valued by doctors, who prescribe it largely for their patients. The absence of all legislation regulating the sale of drugs makes it easy for evil-minded persons to possess themselves of this and other poisons; and the gross ignorance of the Chinese, even the most highly educated, in all matters related to diagnoses secures a practical immunity to poisoners. It is true that occasionally cases of poisoning by arsenic are reported in the *Peking Gazette*, but almost invariably it is found that the murder is discovered, not by the recognition of the symptoms produced by the poison, but by the confession of the murderer or his accomplices. When the unravelling of a crime depends on these coincidences, it is fair to assume that, in a great majority of cases, the offence is never discovered at all.

Like silk, the bamboo is a universal product in China, and the multitude of uses to which the shrub is turned justifies its elevation to an equal rank of usefulness, so far as the natives are concerned, with that article of merchandise. Its use is incomparably more general than that of silk, and enters into the life of every being in the empire, from the Son of Heaven to the scavenger in the streets. It grows over the greater part of the country in great profusion and in a number of varieties, and from the moment it first shows itself above the ground it is forced into the service of man. The shoots come out of the ground nearly

full-sized, four to six inches in diameter, and are cut like asparagus for the table. "Sedentary Buddhist priests raise this Lenten fare for themselves or for sale, and extract the tabasheer from the joints of the old culms, to sell as a precious medicine for almost anything that ails one. The roots are carved into fantastic and ingenious images and stands, or divided into egg-shape divining-blocks to ascertain the will of the gods, or trimmed into lantern handles, canes, and umbrella sticks.

"The tapering culms are used for all purposes that poles can be applied to in carrying, propelling, supporting, and measuring, for which their light, elastic, tubular structure, guarded by a coating of siliceous skin, and strengthened by a thick septum at each joint, most admirably fits them. The pillars and props of houses, the framework of awnings, the ribs of mat sails, and the handles of rakes are each furnished by these culms. So also are fences and all kinds of frames, coops, and cages, the wattles of abatis, and the ribs of umbrellas and fans. The leaves are sewn into rain-cloaks for farmers and sailors, and into thatches for covering their huts and boats; they are pinned into linings for tea-boxes, plaited into immense umbrellas to screen the huckster and his stall from the sun and rain, or into coverings for theatres and sheds. . . . The wood, cut into splints of proper sizes and forms, is woven into baskets of every shape and fancy, sewn into window-curtains and door-screens, plaited into awnings and coverings for tea-chests or sugar-cones, and twisted into cables. The shavings and curled shreds aid softer things in stuffing pillows; while other parts supply the bed

for sleeping, the chopsticks for eating, the pipe for smoking, and the broom for sweeping. The mattress to lie upon, the chair to sit upon, the table to eat on, the food to eat, and the fuel to cook it with, are also derivable from bamboo. The master makes his ferule from it, the carpenter his foot measure, the farmer his water-pipes and straw-rakes, the grocer his gill and pint cups, and the mandarin his dreaded instrument of punishment." *

When such are the uses to which the bamboo is put in the land of its growth, it is surprising that there should be any surplus for exportation. But the demand for it for ornamental and useful purposes in Europe encourages the natives to make a money profit by this article of commerce. As in so many things, the Japanese have forestalled their more phlegmatic neighbours in this branch of trade. But still a traffic exists, and in 1892 bamboos to the value of 349,765 taels were shipped from the treaty ports.

A larger item in the export list is China ware, which, since the suppression of the T'aip'ing rebellion and the reopening of the Kinteh-chin factories, which were ruthlessly destroyed by the rebels, has again been largely manufactured. In the returns for 1892 the value of the China ware exported is put down at 1,084,008 taels. But this sum represents only the porcelain and earthenware goods carried over the seas, and does not include the ware carried overland into Central and Western Asia. Even at a very early period the markets of Teheran, Samarkand, and Cabul were supplied by the indefatigable

* Wells William's "Middle Kingdom," vol. i. pp. 358, 359.

Chinese, and the ware which is now manufactured in Persia bears obvious testimony, by its shape and mode of decoration, to its Eastern origin. Space would fail to write of all the other items in the trade returns, such as fireworks, curiosities, fans, glass bangles, musk, rhubarb, etc. One product, however, which has so curious a genesis that it demands mention, is the white wax of Western China. By a curious provision of nature, the insect which produces the wax is productive only in a district apart from that in which alone it will breed. In the mountainous district of Eastern Szech'uan the valley of Chiench'ang, which is watered by the Anning river, extends from Ningyuan Fu to the upper waters of the Yang-tsze Kiang. The bottom and sides of this comparatively sheltered region are made green all the year round by clusters of the "insect tree"—the *Ligustrum lucidum*, commonly called the "crackling flea tree" from the spluttering of the wood when burning—which there abounds in profusion. In the month of March the twigs and boughs of these trees are covered with numerous brown pea-shaped excrescences which contain the eggs of the wax insect, and which, if opened, present to the eye either a whitey-brown pulpy mass, or a crowd of animals, minute as grains of flour. It is not always, however, that the wax insect is the sole inhabitant of the nest. In the same valley exists a small black beetle which, like the cuckoo, having no home of its own, deposits its eggs in the nest of its smaller neighbour. Like the cuckoo also, it destroys some of its enforced companions, and with them disappears a great part of the commercial value of the nest. This beetle, which is

called by the Chinese *niu-êrh*, or "buffalo," from its awkward shape, feeds on the inner lining of the nest.

At the end of April the nests are collected from the trees and are carried to the town of Tê-ch'ang. Thither at the same season come porters, often to the number of ten thousand, to transport the embryo insects to the district of Chia-ting Fu, where the wax is produced. Two hundred miles separate this locality from the valley of Chien-ch'ang, and the road leads over a mountainous and difficult country. To each porter is apportioned a load consisting of about sixty packets of nests, and weighing about nine hundred and sixty ounces. In an almost endless string the men start off on their journey, and travel only by night, in order to prevent the premature development of the insects by the heat of the sun. On arriving at their halting-places at early dawn, the men spread out their burdens in cool and sheltered spots, where they are allowed to remain until night again gives the signal for departure. In spite of all this care, the nests suffer loss by the escape of the more precocious insects from their enclosures, and it is generally reckoned that each packet loses an ounce in weight in the course of the transit. On their arrival in the district of Chia-ting Fu, the nests are made up into packets of from twenty to thirty, which are sewn up in the leaves of the wood-oil tree with rice straw. With the same material the packets are tied to the boughs and twigs of the *paila shu*, or "white wax tree." The packets are pierced with a coarse needle so as to afford easy egress for the insects when they arrive at maturity. Through

these holes the insects crawl on to the boughs and twigs of the tree, which shortly develop a white coating resembling "very much sulphate of quinine, or a covering of snow." So soon as this deposit becomes visible the farmer belabours the trunk of the tree with a thick club to rid the nests of the beetles which still cling to them. At the end of a hundred days the deposit is considered complete. The branches are then cut off, and so much of the wax as can be collected from them by hand is put into iron cauldrons of boiling water. Under the influence of this heat the wax melts and rises to the surface. It is then skimmed off and put into moulds, which give it the shape in which it appears in the market. The boughs, to which in ordinary cases some wax still adheres, are then thrown into the pot, and the wax derived from this process suffers to the extent of being brown in colour, and so is of secondary value to the merchant. Intent on gaining every atom of the wax, the manufacturer finally collects the dead insects from the bottom of the cauldron, and, having extracted by pressure the last particle of their produce, throws them into the pigs' trough.

In 1884 four hundred and fifty-four tons of this material, valued at about £95,000, were exported from Szech'uan to Shanghai. Since that time, however, a decline has set in. The importation of kerosene oil has seriously affected the position of the wax in the market. A considerable traffic, however, is still maintained, and although the army of coolies for the transportation of the insects is now considerably diminished, troops of them are still to be seen every spring wending their weary

way over the mountains which separate the valley of Chien-ch'ang from Chia-ting Fu.*

One other item of export derives an interest from the nature of the demand as well as that of the supply. At the time that chignons were worn by European ladies, the demand for human hair circulated all over the civilized world, and even reached the markets of far Cathay. The ports of Swatow and Canton were those from which this article of commerce was mainly exported. By the customs' return for Swatow we learn that it first became an article of merchandise in the year 1873, when 141 piculs, valued at 2904 taels, were shipped to Europe. With the demand the supply increased rapidly, so that in 1875 sixty tons of hair were despatched from Swatow. The manner in which the material was collected illustrates the aptitude for trade and the thrifty nature possessed by Chinamen. If reports are to be believed, the supply obtained in Europe is procured by buying the flowing locks of indigent peasant women; but in China the large quantities offered for sale are collected only from the sweepings of barbers' shops. With a change in the style of coiffure worn by ladies came a decrease in this branch of trade. But of late years a further demand has arisen, where from does not appear, and in 1892 human hair to the value of 357,937 taels was shipped abroad. The hair when collected is carefully combed into long tails measuring from two and a half to three feet, and is paid for by the wholesale dealers at a rate of about thirty taels per picul.

* "Three Years in Western China," by Alexander Hosie.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHINESE ARCHITECTURE.

BEFORE entering into a description of a Chinese household it is necessary that something should be said of the Chinese house. We are all familiar with drawings of the quaint roofs with their upturned corners, which characterize the architecture of the country. The form at once suggests that, as is probably the case, this dominant style of building is a survival of the tent-dwellings of the Tartar peoples. It is said that when Jenghiz Khan, the founder of the Mongol dynasty, invaded China, in the thirteenth century, his followers, on possessing themselves of a city, reduced the houses to a still more exact counterpart of their origins by pulling down the walls, and leaving the roofs supported by the wooden pillars which commonly bear the entire weight of those burdens. What at once strikes the eye in the appearance of a Chinese city, even of the capital itself, is the invariable sameness in the style of building. Palaces and temples, public offices and dwelling-houses, are built on one constant model. No spire, no dome, no tower, rises to relieve the monotony of the scene, which is varied only, so far as the buildings are concerned, by the different coloured tiles—green,

yellow, and brown—which indicate roughly the various uses which the buildings they cover are designed to serve, and by occasional pagodas, reminding us of the faith of the people. In his "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture," the late Mr. Fergusson suggested, as a reason for this absence of variety, the fact that "the Chinese never had either a dominant priesthood or an hereditary nobility. The absence of the former class is important, because it is to sacred art that architecture has owed its highest inspiration, and sacred art is never so strongly developed as under the influence of a powerful and splendid hierarchy. In the same manner the want of an hereditary nobility is equally unfavourable to domestic architecture of a durable description. Private feuds and private wars were till lately unknown, and hence there are no fortalices, or fortified mansions, which by their mass and solidity give such a marked character to a certain class of domestic edifices in the West." There are, however, other factors which have operated even more powerfully than these two in producing this monotonous conformity to one model, and that is the sterility of the imaginative powers of the Chinese people, and the steadfast conservatism of the race. Just as the arts and sciences, which in the dim past they acquired from more cultured races in Western Asia, have remained crystallized in the stage in which they received them, and just as their written language has not, like that of Ancient Egypt and Assyria, advanced beyond a primitive phonetic stage, so their knowledge of architecture has been perpetuated without the smallest symptom of development or the least spark

of genius. Even when they have an example of better things before them, they deliberately avert their eyes, and go on repeating the same type of mean and paltry buildings. At all the treaty ports, and notably at Shanghai, there have been reared on the foreign settlement houses in every kind of Western architecture, bordering wide and well-made roads, and provided with every sanitary improvement, and yet, in the adjoining native cities, houses are daily built on exactly the original model, the streets are left as narrow and filthy as ever, and no effort is made to improve the healthiness of the areas. It might be supposed that in a nation where there exists such a profound veneration for everything that is old, the people would have striven to perpetuate the glories of past ages in great and noble monuments, that emperors would have raised palaces to themselves as records of their greatness, and that the magnates of the land would have built houses which should endure as homes for generations of descendants. But it would seem as though their nomadic origin haunted them in this also, and that, as in shape so in durability, "the recollection of their old tent-houses, which were pitched to-day and struck to-morrow, still dominates their ideas of what palaces and houses should be." Throughout the length and breadth of China there is not a single building, except it may be some few pagodas, which by any stretch of the imagination can be called old. A few generations suffice to see the stateliest of their palaces crumble into decay, and a few centuries are enough to obliterate all traces even of royal cities. The Mongol conqueror, Kublai Khan, whose wealth, magnificence, and splendour

are recorded with admiration by travellers, built for himself a capital near the city of Peking. If any historian should wish to trace out for himself the features of that imperial city, he would be compelled to seek amid the earth-covered mounds which alone mark the spot where the conqueror held his court, for any relics which may perchance survive. Above ground the city, with all its barbaric splendours, has vanished as a dream. For this ephemeralness the style and nature of the buildings are responsible. A Chinese architect invites damp, and all the destructive consequences which follow from it, by building his house on the surface of the soil; he ensures instability by basing it on the shallowest of foundations, and he makes certain of its overthrow by using materials which most readily decay. The structure consists of a roof supported by wooden pillars, with the intervals filled in with badly baked bricks. It is strictly in accordance with the topsy-turvy Chinese methods that the framework of the roof should be constructed first, before even the pillars which are to support it are placed in position. But, like most of the other contradictory practices of the people, this one is capable of rational explanation. Strange as it may seem, the pillars are not sunk into the ground, but merely stand upon stone foundations. The weight of the roof is therefore necessary for their support, and to its massive proportions is alone attributable the temporary substantialness of the building. To prevent an overthrow the summits of the pillars are bound together by beams, and much ingenuity and taste is shown in the adornment of the ends of these supports and cross-pieces, which

appear beneath the eaves of the upturned roof. For the most part the pillars are plain, and either square or round, and at the base are slightly cut in, after the manner of the pillars in the temples of ancient Egypt. Occasionally, when especial honour, either due to religious respect or official grandeur, attaches to a building, the pillars are carved into representations of dragons, serpents, or winding foliage, as the taste of the designer may determine. But in a vast majority of buildings the roof is the only ornamented part, and a great amount of pains and skill is devoted to add beauty to this part of the structure. A favourite method of giving an appearance of lightness to the covering of a house or temple which would otherwise look too heavy to be symmetrical, is to make a double roof, so as to break the long line necessitated by a single structure. The effect produced by looking down on a city studded with temples and the palaces of nobles is, so far as colour is concerned, brilliant and picturesque, and reminds the traveller of the view from the Kremlin over the glittering gilt-domed churches of Moscow.

The damp from the soil which is so detrimental to the stability of the building is made equally injurious to the inhabitants by the fact that all dwellings consist of the ground floor only. With very rare exceptions such a thing as an upper story is unknown in China, one reason, no doubt, being that neither the foundations nor the materials are sufficiently trustworthy to support anything higher than the ground floor. The common symbol for a house (房) indicates the ground plan on which dwellings of the better kind are designed. It is one

which is compounded of parts meaning a square (方) within a doorway (戶). On entering the front door the visitor passes into a courtyard, on either side of which are dwelling-rooms, and at the end of which is a hall, with probably rooms at both extremities. Doors at the back of this hall communicate with another courtyard, and in cases of wealthy families, a third courtyard succeeds, which is devoted to the ladies of the household. Beyond this is the garden, and, in the case of country houses, a park. The whole enclosure is surrounded with a blank wall, which is pierced only by the necessary doors. All the windows face inwards. To the wayfarer, therefore, the appearance of houses of the better sort is monotonous and drear, and suggests a want of life which is far from the actual fact, and a desire for privacy which, so far as the apartments devoted to the male inmates are concerned, is equally wide of the mark. In accordance with Chinese custom, the front courtyard may be considered to be open to any one who may choose to wander in, and a desire to exclude all strangers would be held to argue that there was something wrong going on which the owner wished to conceal. The courtyards are decorated with flowers and vases according to the taste of the inhabitants, and occasionally a forest tree arises in their midst, which gives a grateful shade from the heat of the day. The rooms, when well-furnished, are rather artistically pretty than comfortable. To begin with, the floors are either of pounded clay or of badly made bricks. No carpet, except in the north of the country, protects the feet from the damp foundation, and if it were not for the

thick wadded soles of the shoes worn, and the prevailing habit of reclining on divans, and of sitting cross-legged, the result to the health of the people would be very serious. In the south, these divans are of wood, and in the north they take the shape of K'ang, or stove bed-places. These last are commonly built of brick, and occupy one side of the room. They are made hollow, for the insertion of burning brushwood or coal, which affords warmth to the room generally, and especially to the occupants of the K'ang. Mats placed on the brickwork form the resting-place of the wadded bedclothes, which supply all the furniture for the night which a Chinaman requires, except the pillow. To us the idea of a pillow is something soft and yielding, which gives rest, and an elastic support to the whole head. To a Chinaman it conveys quite a different notion. A hard, rounded cylinder of wood or lacquer-ware has, to him, a charm which lulls to sleep in an attitude which would be intolerable to Europeans. It supports only the neck, and leaves the head without anything on which to recline. In some parts of the country, where women, by the use of bandoline, dress their hair in protrusive shapes, this kind of pillow has, at least, one advantage. After the longest night's rest they are able to rise without the slightest derangement of their coiffures, which thus remain for days, and sometimes for weeks, without renewal.

Unlike their Asiatic neighbours, the Chinese have been accustomed to the use of chairs for centuries. A record of the time when they were habituated to the common Oriental custom of sitting on the ground, is preserved in the word for "a feast," the

primary meaning of which is "a mat," suggesting the usual Eastern practice of spreading food on a mat or rug on the floor. But, though they have advanced so far, they have by no means arrived at the knowledge of an easy chair. Angular in shape, stiff and unyielding in its materials, a Chinese chair is only welcome when rest is not an object.

Its very uncomfortable structure and material suggests a foreign origin for it, and even at the present time, the use of chairs is not universal throughout the empire. When the emperor lately received the foreign ministers, he did so seated cross-legged on a cushion; and on all native state occasions in the north of the country this mode of sitting is commonly in vogue. In wealthy households the woods used for furniture are those brought from the Straits Settlements and Borneo, such as camagon, ebony, puru, redwood, and rosewood; while less opulent people are content to use chairs, bedsteads, and tables made of bamboo and stained woods. But, whatever the material, considerable labour and artistic skill are used to give grace and beauty to the various articles. As in the case of the roofs already spoken of, the ornaments in tables are chiefly centred in the space beneath the overlapping tops. Ornamental work, bearing a strong resemblance to Greek patterns, is commonly employed with admirable effect, and though the general appearance of a well-furnished Chinese room is somewhat disfigured by the angular shape of the furniture, the skill with which the different articles are arranged makes up to a great extent for the want of rounded forms and soft materials. Just as the Chinese show a genius for artistic land-

scape gardening, so in their rooms they display a taste in decoration and in harmonizing colours which imparts an air of comfort and elegance to their dwellings. Carved stands, on which are placed diverse shaped vases containing flowering plants or shrubs, dwarfed into quaint and attractive forms, are varied and mingled with rockwork groups in miniature, while on the tables are disposed strangely bound books, and ornaments of every shape and kind.

The walls are commonly hung with scrolls, bearing drawings of landscapes by celebrated masters, in which mountain scenery, falling water, and pavilions shaded by queerly shaped trees, form conspicuous elements. On others are inscribed the choice words of wisdom which fell from the lips of the sages of ancient China, written in black, cursive characters on red or white grounds. But one of the chief glories of the houses of rich men is the wood-carving which adorns the cornices of the rooms and the borders of the doorways. With that richness of ornament which belongs to the East, fruits, flowers, creeping plants, and birds are represented by the artists in an endless variety of beauty, and through this fretted embroidery a cool stream of air circulates in the apartments. In any but a hot climate the absence of carpets, tablecloths, and cushions would give an appearance of discomfort, but with the thermometer standing at the height which the neighbourhood of the tropics gives to it, the aspect of a Chinese room suggests a grateful and refreshing coolness.

The studies of scholars have furniture peculiar to them. The table is supplied with the four

requisites for writing, viz. paper, pencil-brushes, ink, and ink-stone, while against the walls stand shelves on which, by a curious survival of the practice common in the libraries of Babylonia, the books are arranged on their sides, their lower edges, on which are inscribed the titles of the works they contain, being alone apparent.

The following is a description of one of the Foos, or ducal residences, in Peking.

"A Foo has in front of it two large stone lions, with a house for musicians and for gatekeepers. Through a lofty gateway, on which are hung tablets inscribed with the owner's titles, the visitor enters a large square court with a paved terrace in the centre, which fronts the principal hall. Here, on days of ceremony, the slaves and dependants may be ranged in reverential posture before the owner, who sits as the master of the household, in the hall. Behind the principal hall are two other halls, both facing, like it, the south. These buildings all have five or seven compartments, divided by pillars which support the roof, and the three or five in the centre are left open to form one large hall, while the sides are partitioned off to make rooms. Beyond the gable there is usually an extension called the Urfang, literally, the ear-house, from its resemblance in position to that organ. On each side of the large courts fronting the halls are side houses of one or two stories. The garden of a Foo is on the west side, and is usually arranged as an ornamental park, with a lake, wooded mounds, fantastic arbours, small Buddhist temples, covered pasages, and a large open hall for drinking tea, and entertaining guests, which is called Hwat'ing. Garden and

house are kept private, and effectually guarded from intrusion of strangers by a high wall, and at the doors by a numerous staff of messengers. The stables are usually on the east side and contain stout Mongol ponies, large Ili horses, and a good supply of sleek, well-kept mules, such as North China furnishes in abundance. A prince or princess has a retinue of about twenty, mounted on ponies or mules." *

By something more than a sumptuary law, all houses of any pretension face southward, and their sites, far from being left to the mere choice of the proprietors, are determined for them by the rules and regulations of Fêng Shui. This Fêng Shui is that which places a preliminary stumbling-block in the way of every Western improvement. If a railway is proposed, the objection is at once raised that it would destroy the Fêng Shui of the neighbourhood by disturbing the sepulchres of the dead. If a line of telegraph is suggested, the promoters are promptly told that the shadows thrown by the wires on the houses they pass would outrage the Fêng Shui of the neighbourhood and bring disaster and death in their train. In the minds of the people Fêng Shui has a very positive existence, but with the mandarins, who are not all so grossly ignorant, it has been found that when state necessities require it, or when a sufficient sum of money is likely to be their reward, the terrors of Fêng Shui disappear like the morning mists before the sun. The two words Fêng Shui mean "Wind" and "Water," and are

* "Journeyings in North China," by A. Williamson, vol. ii. p. 372.

admittedly not very descriptive of the superstition which they represent.

So far as it is possible to unravel the intricacies of subtle Oriental ideas, Fêng Shui appears to be a faint inkling of natural science overlaid and infinitely disfigured by superstition. As it is now interpreted, its professors explain that what astrology is to the star-gazer, Fêng Shui is to the observer of the surface of our planet. The features of the globe are, we are told, but the reflex of the starry heaven, and just as the conjunction of certain planets presage misfortune to mankind, so the juxtaposition of certain physical features of the earth are fraught with like evil consequences to those under their influence. But, in addition to this, it is believed that through the surface of the earth there run two currents representing the male and female principles of Nature, the one known as the "Azure Dragon," and the other as the "White Tiger." The undulations of the earth's surface are held to supply to the professors of Fêng Shui, aided as they always are by magnetic compasses, the whereabout of these occult forces. To obtain a fortunate site these two currents should be in conjunction, forming as it were a bent arm with their juncture at the elbow. Within the angle formed by this combination is the site which is calculated to bring wealth and happiness to those who are fortunate enough to secure it either for building purposes or for a graveyard. As it is obvious that it is often impossible to secure such a conjunction, the necessary formation has to be supplied by artificial means. A semicircle of trees planted to cover the back of a house answers all the purposes of the "Azure Dragon" and "White

Tiger," while in a level country, a bank of earth of the same shape, surrounding a tomb, is equally effective. Through the mist and folly of this superstition there appears a small particle of reason, and it is beyond question that the sites chosen by these professors are such as avoid many of the ill effects of the climate. Many years ago, when we first settled at Hong Kong, the mortality among the soldiers who occupied the Murray Barracks was terrible. By the advice of the colonial surgeon, a grove of bamboos was planted at the back of the buildings. The effect of this arrangement was largely to diminish the sickness among the troops, and it was so strictly in accordance with the rules of Fêng Shui that the natives at once assumed that the surgeon was a past-master in the science. Again, when we formed the new foreign settlement on the Shamien site at Canton, the Chinese prophesied that evil would befall the dwellings, and "when it was discovered that every house built on Shamien was overrun as soon as built with white ants, boldly defying coal-tar, carbolic acid, and all other foreign appliances; when it was noticed that the English consul, though having a special residence built for him there, would rather live two miles off under the protecting shadow of a pagoda, it was a clear triumph of Fêng Shui and of Chinese statesmanship." *

In front of every house which is protected at the rear by the approved genial influences, there should be a pond, and the approach to the door should be winding, for the double purpose of denying a direct mode of egress to the fortunate breath

* "Fêng Shui," by E. J. Eitel.

of nature secured by the conditions of the site, and of preventing the easy ingress of malign influences. For the same reason a movable screen is commonly placed in the open doorway of a house, which, while standing in the way of the admission of supernatural evil, effectually wards off the very actual discomfort of a draught. With equal advantage a pair of stone lions placed at the doorway of a house which is unfortunate enough to be faced by a straight lane or street are said to overcome the noxious currents which might be tempted by the direct access to attack the dwelling.

Temple architecture differs little from that of the houses, and varies in the same way from splendour to squalor, from gorgeous shrines built with the costly woods of Borneo and roofed in with resplendent glazed tiles to lath-and-plaster sheds covered in with mud roofing. In country districts, and more especially in hilly regions, Buddhists show a marked predilection for the most sheltered and beautiful spots provided by nature, and there rear monasteries which might well tempt men of less ascetic mould than that they profess to be made of to assume the cowl. The contemplative life which they are in theory supposed to lead is held to tempt them to retire from the busy haunts of men and to seek in the deep ravines and sheltered valleys the repose and quiet which in more public positions would be denied them. It says much for the charity of the people that out of their poverty such sumptuous edifices can be raised to the glory of Buddha. Many owe their existence to the beneficence of emperors, and others to the superstition of notables who, in the performance of

vows, have reared stately temples to the beneficent avatars of Buddha who have listened to their prayers. The majority, however, are built from the doles secured by the priests from the wretched resources of the people. With indefatigable labour these religious beggars draw into their nets fish great and small, and prey on the superstition of the people for the glorification of their faith. Sometimes, however, the self-denial is not confined to the donors. Devout priests arouse the zeal of their congregations by placing themselves in penitential positions until the building money is collected, and thus add to their claims on the people by appealing to their pity. Not long ago, a begging priest, zealous for the faith, erected for himself a wooden case like a sentry-box in one of the public thoroughfares of Peking. Long and sharp nails were driven into the case on all sides from without, leaving their points projecting inwards. In this case the priest took his stand and declared his intention of remaining there until the sum required for building the temple for which he pleaded had been collected. The construction of the case made it impossible that he could either sit down or lean in any position which would secure him against the points of the nails. For two years he stood or professed to have stood in this impossible position, which was mitigated as time went on by the withdrawal of the nails, one by one, as the sum of money which each was held to represent was collected from the passers-by.

It is impossible to leave the architecture of the country without saying one word about the bridges which span the canals and rivers. For the most

part these are high wooden structures, such as those with which the willow-pattern plates have made us familiar, but occasionally, and especially on the highways to the capital, substantial stone bridges stretching in a series of arches across the streams are met with, carefully wrought and adorned with all kinds of fantastic devices. A noticeable instance of a bridge of this kind is one which crosses the river Hwên on the west of Peking. Though upwards of six hundred years old, its neighbourhood to the capital has secured its preservation. Its length is seven hundred feet and at its narrowest part the roadway is twelve feet wide. Stone lions of varied and quaint shapes stand at intervals along the parapets, and in such numbers that, according to the local legend, no one has been able to count them correctly. "At each end are monumental stones—huge upright slabs of marble under heavy stone or wooden canopies—on which are inscribed either laudatory notices of the builders of the bridge, or imperial eulogies of the scenery around."* For the most part, however, the condition of the bridges throughout the country is deplorable. Carters and horsemen cross them at imminent peril to life and limb, and had not the animals learnt to pick their way with as much caution as that practised by travellers on foot, the passage would often be impossible.

* "Journeys in North China," by A. Williamson, vol. i. p. 53.

CHAPTER XX.

DOMESTIC SLAVES.

One of the most marked features of a wealthy Chinese household is the number of retainers who swarm on all sides. Many of these are hired servants, but a large portion commonly belong to the unfortunate class of slaves. In China, as in other Eastern countries, the practice of slavery has a long history. References to it are found in the earliest works in the literature, and the character which is usually employed to represent the word "slave" gives us some indications of the earliest form which the practice took. A "woman" and a "hand" combined compose the symbol; and if we may draw any inference from this combination, it is fair to assume that the first slaves were the women captured in warfare from hostile tribes. But we soon find that men shared captivity with their womenkind. The practice having thus originated, and a want having been created among the wealthier classes for this particular kind of goods and chattels, it was necessary that the supply should be artificially provided so soon as the more primitive method failed to produce the required numbers. Now, as for many centuries, slaves of both sexes are openly bought and sold all over the empire.

At the present day a young girl of ten or twelve is worth, at Peking, from thirty to fifty taels, and young women commonly fetch from two hundred and fifty to three hundred taels. Poverty is the prime cause of the full markets; and especially in times of famine, drought, and pestilence, it is common for men who at other times would shrink with abhorrence from the deed, to sell their wives and daughters to the highest bidders. Gambling is also responsible for much of the poverty which produces this state of things; and in all large towns there are recognized brokers who deal in these human wares.

As a rule, the dealer, before purchasing, insists on the persons offered for sale being deposited with him for a time, much as the buyer of a horse demands a trial before concluding the deal; and should they develop any ailments or defects which are likely to interfere with their re-sale, they are incontinently returned to the place whence they came. Leprosy in the south of China is always carefully watched for by the dealers, and a curious method is employed to discover whether or no they have a tendency towards the disease. Each "slave is taken into a dark room and a blue light is burned. Should the face of the slave assume a greenish hue in this light, a favourable opinion is entertained. Should it show a reddish colour, it is concluded that the blood is tainted by this loathsome disease." *

But slaves are procured in other ways than by purchase. They are not uncommonly given as presents by one man to another, and more especially is this so in the case of girls, who very frequently

* "China," by Archdeacon Gray, vol. i. p. 242.

pass from one household to another to fulfil the office of secondary wives. The desire for progeny makes it almost incumbent on a man whose wife happens to be childless to take a concubine either from the slave-girls in his own house or from the broker, in case no rich friend offers to supply his want out of his superfluity. It occasionally happens that slaves form part of a bride's outfit, and the very objectionable method of kidnapping is very commonly resorted to to supply the markets. This last practice is vigorously denounced by law, and kidnappers caught *flagrante delicto* are, if not lynched by the people, tortured and put to death by the mandarins.

If we may judge from contemporary fiction, slaves are, as a rule, well and justly treated, but their position leaves them powerless to defend themselves against cruelly disposed masters and mistresses. Instances of the grossest cruelty must be known to every one acquainted with Chinese society. Archdeacon Gray tells us of an inhuman master at Canton, who, having discovered a little slave-boy in an act of theft, bound his hands and feet together and threw him into the river. Happily, the crew of a British gunboat rescued him from death, and his brutal master was handed over to the Chinese authorities for punishment. At first the mandarins declined to recognize him as an offender, but at the instigation of the allied English and French commissioners, who then governed the city, they were ultimately induced to relegate the monster to the chilling influences of a Chinese prison. This instance illustrates the fact that the murder of a slave is not regarded as an act much more blameworthy

than maliciously killing the horse or the ox belonging to another. The penalty for this last offence is by law assessed at a hundred blows; while the murderer of a slave, if the full punishment were meted out to him, would receive only a hundred and seventy blows. The probability, however, is that slaves in China enjoy a considerable amount of comfort and liberty. The practice, which is universal, of masters and mistresses cultivating familiarity with their servants and slaves, produces a relationship which tends to soften the differences between the two. More especially is this the case with the maidservants, who are commonly on such terms of close intimacy with their mistresses as we are entirely unaccustomed to. No doubt the fact that female education is at a discount in China is to a great extent accountable for this state of things. Most mistresses are no better educated than their maids, and hence arises an equality which is differentiated only by natural gifts, of which the slave is not unfrequently the richer possessor. Ladies also are dependent on their slaves to a degree unknown in Western lands. Their small feet make the help of their handmaidens a necessity to them, and it is not at all unusual to see one of these true helpmeets carrying her small-footed mistress on her back when occasion requires her to go beyond the distance to which her "golden lilies" are able to support her.

The appearance of advertisements proclaiming that such and such a slave has run away from his or her master or mistress is unpleasant evidence of the fact that their lots do not always fall in pleasant places. Many of these fugitives doubtless escape altogether, and it is to be hoped that they

do so, for the punishment inflicted on those who are caught is extremely severe, one of the least part of which is branding on the cheek to render the capture more easy in case the runaway should be tempted to repeat the offence. When the woes of slavery are balanced against the privileges which it undoubtedly entails of food and raiment without money and without price, and often kindly treatment at the hands of the owner, the Chinese slave will probably echo Tristram Shandy's words, "Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, slavery, still thou art a bitter draught."

CHAPTER XXI.

INFANTICIDE.

As has already been said, it is usual on the marriage of a son that he should bring his wife to the shelter of his father's roof, and the result is that the Chinese household occasionally contains an entire sept, which multiplies and grows as generations arise. The early age at which marriages are contracted makes it not at all unusual for a man to see his grandsons and great-grandsons springing up about him, and cases are not unfrequently reported to the throne of veterans who have five generations living under their roofs. Indeed, in the sacred edict of K'anghsi, mention is made of one man who had nine generations about him, and of another man at whose tables seven hundred mouths were daily fed. This patriarchal system, though admirable in theory, has its drawbacks. We know that among ourselves the intrusion into the household of even a single relative is sometimes accompanied with friction, but in China it is possible to have living together two or three daughters-in-law and two or three granddaughters-in-law, with their husbands and children. That quarrels, jealousies, and antagonisms constantly arise is only to say that

the Chinese are human; and to add that gross cruelties are sometimes practised on the intruding daughter is only to say that the people are Chinese. Not long since a case was reported in the *Peking Gazette*, in which a woman had burned the girl who was reared to become her son's wife, with incense sticks, then roasted her cheeks with red-hot pincers, and finally scalded her to death. There is a common saying, "Don't believe your wife's report of your brothers and sisters-in-law," and instances often occur of women being driven to commit suicide to escape the contentions and miseries of family life. All this has a decentralizing effect, and the sons, even if they have no ambition of their own, are not unnaturally prompted by their wives to seek employment or occupation away from home. It is, therefore, only the drones of society or those who follow their father's business who permanently live in the family. Such a state of affairs is only possible among a people who, like the Chinese, have a profound respect for age. The obedience which is enforced towards parents is absolute, and the code which regulates the behaviour of younger brothers towards their seniors is exact and generally respected. That social pressure which is so powerful in China compels a rigid adherence to these family canons, and a man infringes them at the risk of being made an outcast among his own people.

The power which a father has over his sons or daughters is practically unlimited. He may kill them, sell them, or use them in any way he pleases, and the only check upon his complete authority is the law which provides that "if a father, mother, paternal grandfather or grandmother, chastises a

disobedient child or grandchild in a severe and uncustomary manner, so that he or she dies, the party so offending shall be punished with one hundred blows." In common practice, however, this law is more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and in the case of sons, the only limitation to a parent's authority is when, as mandarins, it is held to be incumbent on them to owe their first duty to their emperor. As a matter of fact, sons are too highly valued a possession to make a parent, except in most extreme cases, exercise his full rights over their lives or liberties. Cases do, however, very rarely occur of parents in an excess of rage taking the extreme power into their hands. It has always been believed that the Emperor Taokwang, the grandfather of the present emperor, did, in a moment of anger, kick one of his sons to death, and not long since a case occurred of an incorrigibly disobedient son who was handed over to the local mandarin to be made away with. But these instances only attest the power of the parent. Speaking generally, sons are so universally regarded as necessary to the support of their parents, to their comfort in old age, and to the repose of their souls after death, that they are treasured and valued as one of Heaven's best gifts. With daughters it is different. They are looked upon as unprofitable servants during their early years, and as burdens which are only to be got rid of by incurring the expenses of marriage. No interested motive, therefore, protects them from the indifference and cruelty of parents, and in many parts of the country their lives, when infants, are sacrificed to the wants and needs of the household. The extent to which this practice prevails has,

probably, been much exaggerated. In the richer parts of the country it is almost unknown, and it is only in those districts where grinding poverty obliterates natural affection that it is prevalent. In such neighbourhoods, however, it is looked upon as an ordinary occurrence, and notices may occasionally be seen at the sides of pools to the effect that "Girls may not be drowned here." The people in such poverty-stricken parts of the country speak of the practice without shame, and mothers will confess without compunction that they have put an end to the existences of one, two, or three daughters, as the case may be. The province of Fuhkien is that in which this crime most obtains. Inquiries show that in many districts as large a proportion as one-fourth of the female children born are destroyed at birth. At Peking, on the other hand, it cannot be said to exist at all. But in this, as in so many social offences in China, the sword of the law, which is alone capable of putting down the crime, is allowed to hang like a rusty weapon on the wall. It is true that occasionally proclamations are issued in which the heinousness of the evil is explained, with all the impressiveness that could be desired, but so long as natural affection finds no support from without it will continue, in China, to yield to the requirements of daily food. To some extent the length to which filial piety is carried by the philosophers and moral teachers of the nation is responsible for the lax views of the people on the subject. We have seen that a man has for many centuries been held up as a model of excellence, who was saved only by a miracle from murdering his infant to preserve the

life of his mother. When the life of a child is recognized as an exchangeable quantity, it is difficult to prevent fathers from confusing the moral difference between bartering it for their own or for their parents' sake. But it is difficult to pronounce accurately on the prevalence of the practice. An incident which occurred at Hong Kong two or three years ago forcibly illustrates how easily the practice may be going on without its becoming in any way prominent or even noticeable. An officer of engineers who was stationed in that colony, was crossing the harbour on one occasion, when the exigencies of the tide compelled him to run under the lee of a rock, which lies at some little distance from the shore. While thus delayed he, with the restlessness of an Englishman, clambered up on to the rock, and, to his horror, found its smooth surface covered with the unburied remains of infants. In making his way through this scene of murder, he fancied that he saw signs of life in one of the tiny forms. On going to the spot he discovered that his impression was correct, and found that the parent, with a strange attempt to palliate the horrors of the desertion, had placed by the side of the helpless infant a cup of rice, which of course it was powerless to reach. With all convenient speed the officer carried the little victim to the Roman Catholic Orphanage at Hong Kong, where, however, all the tenderness of the sisters was powerless to prolong the already waning life. When such wholesale murder can be going on within the waters of one of our colonies, it behoves foreigners to speak with caution of the existence or non-existence of the

practice in the purlieus and obscurities of native cities. It will, however, generally be found that, in places where it prevails, poverty alone is the motive which induces Chinese parents to outrage a natural feeling which is as strong amongst them as amongst the other nations of the East.

CHAPTER XXII.

FOOD AND DRESS.

It is probable that in the congested districts of Southern China the population is more dense than in any other country, and the struggle for existence is proportionately severe. If it were not for the small wants and meagre diet of Chinamen, such swarms of human beings as are to be seen in Canton, for example, where, the land being unable to contain the inhabitants, the streets may be said to have been carried on to the surface of the river, could not exist. Two bowls of rice with scraps of vegetables or pieces of fish added, suffice for the daily food of countless thousands of the people. With all classes rice and vegetables form the staple food, as we find illustrated by the fact that the native equivalents of these words are used to express food generally. In his invitation to partake of the most sumptuous viands the host will ask his guest "to eat rice," and a servant announcing a feast will proclaim that "the vegetables are served." To the production of grain and vegetables every available scrap of land and all the energies of the people are devoted. There is probably not an acre of meadow land in China. Flocks of sheep and herds of cattle are, therefore, unknown; and the beasts which are

reared on the sides of hills, and with artificial food, are so few in number that the flesh is obtainable only by the wealthiest of those who are freed from the Buddhistic belief in the transmigration of souls. Pigs, fowls, ducks, and fish are more cheaply obtained, and it is probable that pork forms quite half the meat which is eaten. Ducks are reared in enormous quantities, the eggs as well as those of fowls being for the most part hatched by artificial heat. There being no ownership in rivers, the fishing industry is carried on without let or hindrance. By net, by line, by the clever use of light to attract, and of noise to frighten, the fish are captured from the streams and supply a cheap and most useful article of food. Every kind of living creature which moves in the waters is eaten, and even water snakes form a common article of food. These, with eels, carp, and tench, are, when caught, commonly kept in tanks, where they are carefully fed, and are sold as required. Most of the fishing-boats have tanks in which the captured fish are kept alive, and though the flesh suffers from the artificial food and surroundings, the prudent economy of the system recommends it to the frugal minds of the natives.

These, then, with rice at their head, are the staples of life. But the same poverty which induces Chinese parents to murder their female infants prompts them occasionally to take advantage of less savoury viands to satisfy their hunger. It is an undoubted fact that rats, dogs, and horseflesh are sold in Canton and elsewhere. The passing traveller may see dried rats hung up in poulterers' shops, and a little investigation will prove indisputably to him that horseflesh, even when the animal

has met its death in another way than at the butcher's shambles, is greedily devoured. It is an unquestionable fact that Chinamen will eat, and apparently without any ill effects, meat which would poison Englishmen. The flesh of horses which have died of glanders, and of other animals which have succumbed to diseases of all sorts, are eaten by the beggars and other poverty-stricken people, who infest the streets of all large cities. A superstition also attaches to the flesh of dogs and cats, especially black ones. It is considered eminently nutritious, and is recommended by the doctors as a wholesome and invigorating diet in the summer season, as well as a general preventative against disease. The same high authorities prescribe a course of rat's flesh for people inclined to baldness. The late Archdeacon Gray, who probably knew Canton better than any living foreigner, in speaking, in his work on China, of a cat and dog restaurant, says: "The flesh is cut into small pieces and fried with water chestnuts and garlic in oil. In the window of the restaurant dogs' carcases are suspended for the purpose, I suppose, of attracting the attention of passengers. Placards are sometimes placed above the door, setting forth that the flesh of black dogs and cats can be served up at a moment's notice;" and then he proceeds to give a translation of a bill of fare such as hangs on the walls of the dining-rooms. The supposed medicinal properties of these horrible articles of food no doubt prompt many people to partake of them. In the northern cities of the empire it is usual in the autumn to see men selling locusts fried in oil at the corners of streets, much as people offer roasted chestnuts

for sale in our own thoroughfares. The locusts so dealt with are regarded as a luxury, and are considered to be more nutritive and better flavoured if they are thrown into the boiling oil alive. But whatever the food may be, other than grain, it is cut up into small pieces to suit the requirements of the chopsticks, which are invariably used to transfer the food from the plate to the mouth. Knives and forks are unknown for this purpose, and the two sticks, which to foreigners are such stumbling-blocks at native dinners, furnish all that a Chinaman wants with which to supply himself with even the most oleaginous food. The presence of excessive quantities of oil and fat in Chinese cooking is to Europeans its great offence, and the large admixture of onions and garlic adds another obnoxious feature to ordinary viands; but, apart from these peculiarities, the food is always well cooked, and authorities affirm that it is eminently digestible. The following Chinese dishes, taken from the *menu* of the dinner which was given by the Chinese of Hong Kong to the Duke of Connaught, give a good idea of the sort of fare which a Chinese host presents to his guests on state occasions:—

"Birds'-nest soup. Stewed shell-fish. Cassia mushrooms. Crab and sharks' fins. 'Promotion' (boiled quail, etc.). Fried marine delicacies. Fish gills. Sliced teal. Peking mushrooms. Bêches-de-mer. Sliced pigeon. Macaroni." *

The mention of some of these dishes is enough to explain why it is that Englishmen come away hungry from a Chinese dinner-party; nor are their appetites encouraged by the fact that the feasters, in

* "Things Chinese." By J. Dyer Bale, p. 155.

the enjoyment of the good things provided, generally find it necessary to discard some of their clothing to adjust their heightened temperatures. Their system of dress is admirably adapted for this kind of emergency. Like their food it possesses some admirable qualities, some doubtful ones, and others which are repulsive. Its general character is looseness; nothing fits tightly to the person, and complete freedom is thereby secured to the limbs. It is a canon of Chinese art that the outline of the human frame should never be more than dimly indicated. For this reason a sculpture gallery is abhorrent to them, as was amusingly shown on the occasion of a visit paid to the British Museum by the first Chinese Minister at our court. At the first sight of the beautiful objects in the Greek and Roman galleries he looked around him in bewilderment, and then, realizing the situation, hurried by them with significant haste, looking neither to his right hand nor to his left. On this principle the dress of all Chinamen partakes of the nature of robes, which reach from the neck to the ankles—concealing loose vests, and trousers which among the better classes are encased in gaiters of materials suited to their conditions. Above the upper part of the robe there is commonly worn a jacket made of stuffs according to the season, silks in summer, and wadded cotton or fur in the winter months. The dresses of the mandarins and their wives are, as has been already stated, strictly regulated by sumptuary laws.

Since the rise of the Manchus to power, the buttons on the caps, spoken of in a previous chapter, have been added to distinguish the various

grades in the official hierarchy. The first to institute this system was Ts'ungtê, the immediate predecessor of Shunchi, the first emperor of the present Manchu line, who reigned in Manchuria from 1636 to 1644. At his command every official was obliged to wear a gold button on his cap to distinguish him from the common herd. By degrees further distinctions were introduced. To a high official was assigned a gold button set in pearls, while to a general was given one surrounded with precious stones. From this beginning the present system arose. Another and a far greater innovation than this was introduced by the Manchu invaders. As a badge of conquest, they compelled the whole male population to shave the front part of the head and to wear the queue, which now distinguishes the Chinese from the rest of mankind. The manner in which this badge was adopted, and the tenacity with which it is now adhered to, are worthy of note as illustrating the character of the people. At first it was fiercely resisted, even unto death. The vanquished everywhere took up arms against it, and it was only by violence varied with cajolery that the Manchus were eventually able to compel its adoption. When once it was accepted, however, it came to be regarded with the greatest affection, and no greater indignity can be inflicted on a loyal Chinaman of the present day than to cut off the queue, against the adoption of which his ancestors fought so strenuously. But with the T'aip'ings and other rebels the disappearance of the queue, and the growth of the hair on the head, have been accepted as badges of antagonism to the present dynasty, and the dis-

covery in a disaffected district of a man with these distinguishing marks secures him but a short shrift before he is called upon to expiate his disloyalty on the execution ground. But to return to the dress of the officials. The cap varies in shape and material according to the season. In summer it consists of a round cone made of fine straw or bamboo, and is covered with a tassel of red silken cords which radiate from the apex. In winter it is turned up at the brim, and is covered with dark satin, over which falls in the same way a similar tassel. The button is fixed in a gold setting above the tassel at the centre of the crown. The changes of uniform at the summer and winter seasons are carefully regulated by law, and, in obedience to imperial edicts, published as the periods approach, every mandarin, from the great wall on the north, to the boundaries on Tonquin on the south, makes his official change of attire on the days exactly specified by the emperor, quite irrespective of the condition of the thermometer.

The wives of mandarins render their official attire as splendid as rich silks, gay colours, and bright embroideries can make them. In shape they are identical with those worn by women of every degree in the empire, and consist of a loose tunic reaching to the knees, which buttons at the neck and under the right arm. A pair of trousers drawn in at the ankle completes the attire on ordinary occasions, but on high days and holidays an embroidered petticoat, which hangs square both before and behind, is worn by ladies. The hair is always carefully dressed and gaily adorned, but in ways and fashions which differ in every part of

the empire. Flowers, both natural and artificial, are largely used as ornaments to the head, and richly chased and jewelled hairpins are added to give taste to the coiffure. These last are often of considerable value, and are commonly presents either from parents or husbands. They not unfrequently form the principal part of the property belonging to the owners, and in cases of emergency they are the first things resorted to for the purpose of raising money. They are sometimes given also by their fair owners to friends as tokens of regard, and in many plays and novels their disappearance from the heads of wives is made to arouse the same suspicions in the minds of the ladies' husbands as the loss of Desdemona's handkerchief did in the poisoned brain of Othello. The striking feature, however, in the women's appearance and gait is their misshapen feet. In most lands the desire is to give freedom to movement, but an absurd fashion, backed by the weight of centuries, has crippled and disabled countless generations of the women in China. No sufficient explanation has ever been given of the origin of this very unnatural custom, which is all the more objectionable as Chinawomen, speaking generally, are gifted with finely shaped hands and feet. The saying of a French lady that one must suffer to be beautiful is certainly true—accepting the Chinese estimate of the fashion—in the case of the poor ladies of China. The size and shape of the foot which fashion requires are only to be attained by a dislocation which causes great pain in the first instance, and often permanent suffering. At an early age, generally when the child is about four or five, the process begins by the feet being

bound tightly round in the required shape. The four smaller toes are bent under the foot, the big toe is sometimes brought backwards on the top of the foot, and the instep is forced upwards and backwards. In this way the foot is clubbed and is forced into a shoe from about three to four inches long. The little victims of this cruel fashion unquestionably suffer great pain in the early stages, but as a rule the skin, which at first is dreadfully abrased, becomes gradually hardened, and as those whose feet are squeezed into shoes of the size mentioned are ladies who are not required to move about much, their feet probably answer all the purposes expected of them. This is not saying much. A lady scarcely walks at all. If she goes out she is either carried in a sedan-chair, or, in the north of the country, in a carriage. Within doors she either hobbles about, leaning on a stick or on the shoulder of a waiting-maid, or is carried on the back of a servant. It is obvious that this extreme compression would render women of the poorer classes quite unfitted to fulfil their necessary avocations, and with them therefore the feet are allowed greater scope. The custom is entirely confined to the Chinese; the Manchu conquerors having never submitted their own women to the torture and discomfort of the practice, neither, also, have the boat populations thought it necessary to deform themselves for the sake of fashion. It is even said that in the neighbourhood of Ning-po a movement is on foot among the Christian population to abolish this fetish of fashion, but it is doubtful whether its promotion by converts from the national religion will do much to advance even so rational an object.

In their desire to make beautiful what is naturally so ugly, the women delight to adorn the shoes with rich and bright embroidery; and fortunately for them the swaying gait which the fashion compels them to assume in walking has come to be regarded as a winsome beauty. Poets are never tired of describing in verse the leaf-shaped eyebrows, the willow waists, and the swaying movements of Chinese ladies, which they liken to boughs gently waving in the wind.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GARDENS AND TRAVEL.

It is well that it is possible to find something to say in favour of the cruel custom of crippling the feet of the women, and cynically minded Chinamen add to their approval of the grace which it imparts to the step, their appreciation of the fact that it prevents ladies from gadding about. This it certainly does, and even the exercise which they are tempted to take in their gardens is confined to very limited excursions. The love of flowers seems to be inherent in the people of the extreme East, and their gardens are to both the men and women of China a never-failing delight. With much taste they lay out the ground and dispose the flowers to the best possible advantage. As landscape gardeners they are unsurpassed, and succeed by skilful arrangement in giving an impression of extent and beauty to even paltry and naturally uninteresting pieces of ground. By clever groupings of rock-work, by raising artificial hills, and by throwing high bridges over ponds and streams, they produce a panorama which is full of fresh points of view and of constant surprises. As De Guignes wrote, in describing Chinese gardens,

the object of the owner is to imitate "the beauties and to produce the inequalities of nature. Instead of alleys planted symmetrically or uniform grounds, there are winding footpaths, trees here and there as if by chance, woody or sterile hillocks, and deep gullies with narrow passages, whose sides are steep or rough with rocks, and presenting only a few miserable shrubs. They like to bring together in gardening, in the same view, cultivated grounds and arid plains; to make the field uneven and cover it with artificial rock-work; to dig caverns in mountains, on whose tops are arbours half overthrown and around which tortuous footpaths run and return into themselves, prolonging, as it were, the extent of the grounds and increasing the pleasure of the walk." In the more purely floral parterres, the plants are arranged so as to secure brilliancy of bloom with harmony of colour. Over the greater part of China the land is favoured with so fertile a soil and so congenial a climate that flowers grow and blossom with prodigal profusion. Roses, hydrangeas, peonies, azaleas, and a host of other plants beautify the ground, while creepers of every hue and clinging growth hang from the boughs of the trees and from the eaves of the summer-houses and pavilions which are scattered over the grounds. With the instinctive love of flowers which belongs to Chinamen, the appearance of the blooms on the more conspicuous flowering shrubs is eagerly watched for. Floral calendars are found in every house above the poorest, and expeditions are constantly made into the country districts to enjoy the sight of the first bursting into blossom of favourite flowers. The presence of

ponds gives a sense of coolness to the pleasure-grounds, and the white and pink water-lilies which adorn their surface furnish excuses to revellers for holding endless wine-feasts on their margins. In the literature frequent references are made to such entertainments, and numerous volumes have been carefully compiled of the more highly esteemed poems made on such occasions in praise of the camellia, apricot, peach, chrysanthemum, hibiscus, and an endless array of other flowers, by the minor poets of the country.

The manner and convenience of travel supply a faithful index of the stage of civilization to which the people of a country have arrived, and in the conveyances in vogue in China we see repeated the strange contradictions which have met us as we have glanced at each feature of Chinese society. In every case there is much to be admired; but in every case, what is good and excellent is marred by some defacing or neutralizing quality. Just as the outward appearance of their furniture is spoiled by the exquisite discomfort of their chairs and divans; and their stately ceremonies, by dirt and squalor; so their means of travelling, which in some ways are luxurious, are discredited by the discomfort of the carts, the mud and ruts of the roads, and the miserable condition of the inns. With us the question of pace enters largely into our ideas of travelling, but in the leisurely East, where hurry is unknown, the speed with which a journey can be made is not of the slightest consequence. We have lately had an excellent illustration of this on the waters of the Yang-tsze Kiang. At the present time steamers go up the river to Ich'ang, a distance of

fifteen hundred miles from the mouth. For four hundred miles above that point there are a succession of rapids, to ascend which, in a native boat at certain seasons of the year, occupies six or seven weeks, or just about the length of time it takes a fast steamer to make its way from Ich'ang to London. It has been shown to the Chinese how it would be possible to remove the greater part of the obstacles which make the voyage so difficult, and how, when this is done, steamers might readily continue their way up the river. But nothing will induce the Government, the local officials, or the merchants interested, to support the scheme, and all deliberately prefer to put up with the delay, dangers, and frequent losses incurred under the present system to encouraging an enterprise which would save four-fifths of the time employed, and would reduce the peril and loss to a minimum.

The particular kinds of conveyance used in China vary with the nature of the country. In the north, where the huge delta plain and immense table-lands form the surface, carts are commonly used, and these again furnish an instance of the mixed nature of Chinese civilization. They are made on two wheels, without springs and without seats. As has been said, the Chinese have no idea of comfort as we understand the word, and these vehicles are a complete justification of the statement. To a European they are the acme of misery. The occupant seats himself on the floor of the cart, and is thrown hither and thither as the ruts may determine and the skill of the driver may permit. The novice, when going to sea, is commonly advised to attempt to avoid the inevitable fate which awaits him by

allowing his body to sway with the movements of the vessel, and in the same way those who drive in Chinese carts are recommended to yield their persons to the strange bumps and rockings of the springless vehicles, but, so far as the experience of the present writer goes, no better result follows in this than in the other case. It is remarkable that, though carts have been in use for thirty or more centuries, the Chinese have made no attempt to improve their very rough construction. Springs are unknown, and the only method occasionally adopted to mitigate the horrors of driving is that of placing the axles and wheels behind the body of the cart, and at the rear extremity of the beams of wood which constitute the support of the vehicle, and when produced in front form the shafts. In this way the cart is swung between the animal drawing it and the axle. No seat is provided for the driver, who commonly takes possession of the off shaft, and seriously interferes with the ventilation available for the passenger by almost entirely blocking up the only opening which serves both as door and window. Carts of the ordinary kind stand for hire in the streets of Peking and of other northern cities, and are constantly employed as far south as the banks of the Yang-tsze Kiang. For carrying purposes large waggons are used which are commonly drawn by seven animals, a pony being in the shafts and the rest being arranged three abreast in front. Such conveyances when loaded travel from fifty to eighty Chinese miles a day, or from about sixteen to twenty-six English miles. In the neighbourhood of Newchwang an immense traffic is carried on by means of these vehicles, and during the busiest two months

of the year it is reckoned that upwards of thirty thousand carts, drawn by more than two hundred thousand animals, pass between the inland districts and the port, bringing the native products to the wharves of Newchwang, and carrying back the cotton cloths and hardware which are brought from the despised lands of the "barbarians." Sedan-chairs and horseback are also usual means of travelling, and in the southern half of the empire these modes of locomotion are alone employed on *terra firma*, the roads being too narrow to allow of the passage of anything on wheels.

But in this part, as all over the empire, the many rivers and canals which fertilize the land and add beauty to its features, are the favourite highways of travel and commerce. The better class of passenger vessels are large and commodious, and contain all the conveniences to which Chinamen are accustomed in their own homes. They are commonly from sixty to eighty feet long, and are divided into three rooms. The principal apartment, which occupies about half the boat, is approached in front through a vestibule, and is connected with the bedroom which separates it from the stern. The fore part of the boat is decked over with movable planks, and affords dark and airless cabin accommodation for the crew. The vessels are supplied with masts on which, when the wind is favourable, sails are hoisted. Under less fortunate conditions oars and tacking are used to propel them. From this kind of vessel to the merest *sampan*, the waters of China furnish every variety of boats.

There is one other means of locomotion which remains to be mentioned, and that is one which

has attracted more attention than perhaps it deserves. We refer to the wheelbarrow, of which Milton wrote:—

> "Sericana, where Chineses drive
> With sail and wind their cany waggons light."

The Chinese are intensely poor, and as the possession of a horse and cart is far beyond the means of the vast majority, wheelbarrows are very commonly used to carry goods and passengers. To lighten the task of the porter the wheels are placed in the centre of the barrow, and thus directly bear the weight of the burden. But this arrangement naturally reduces the space available for use, since the load, whether living or dead, has to be placed on the two sides of the wheel, from which it is protected by a casing. On the northern plains, if the wind should be aft, a sail is very commonly hoisted, in which case considerable distances can be traversed in the day.

In Western lands the prospect of his inn at the end of a journey cheers the traveller. No such consolation is afforded to wayfarers, or at least to European wayfarers, in China. The exchange from horseback, or from the racking of a native cart, to an inn is not much to the advantage of the last. No comfort is provided, no privacy is secured, and no quiet is obtained. The rooms are mean and infinitely dirty, and, in the north, surround the courtyard, which serves as the stables for the mules, ponies, and donkeys of the travellers. "It is not uncommon to see as many as fifty donkeys in one inn yard, and the pandemonium which they occasion at night can be but faintly imagined." *

* "Chinese Characteristics," p. 168.

The poetical description of a room at an inn in Szech'uan, which Mr. Hosie found scratched on the wall of this apartment, aptly supplements the above. The original, which was in Chinese verse, is rendered by Mr. Hosie as follows:—

"Within this room you'll find the rats,
At least a goodly store,
Three catties each they are bound to weigh,
Or e'en a little more;
At night you'll find a myriad bugs,
That sting and crawl and bite;
If doubtful of the truth of this,
Get up, and strike a light."

CHAPTER XXIV.

AMUSEMENTS.

So much has been said of the dark side of Chinese life, that it is a pleasure to turn to those amusements which break the dreary monotony of existence. The great body of the people are hard workers, and, being so, find, like all other laboriously employed people, that amusements are necessary to life and health. From another motive the idle classes—that is, the *literati*, as they are called, or the unemployed graduates, and the ladies—find that to kill time they must seek excitement in some form of diversion. For these reasons the theatres are generally well filled by all sorts and conditions of men, and no opportunity is missed of engaging a company for the entertainment of the neighbourhood. As such opportunities are prompted by many and different motives, actors are in constant request. Not unfrequently the excuse is a desire to do honour to the local deities. Either a fall of rain after a prolonged drought makes a Thespian display an appropriate token of gratitude to the snake god, or the elfin fox deity is held to regard a like festivity as a due acknowledgment for his clemency in dispersing an epidemic; but, whatever the religious objects may be, arrangements are commonly made

to hold the performance in the courtyard of one of the temples. For the expenses the whole village or town is responsible, and so soon as the required sum, from twenty to a hundred dollars a day, is raised — a matter which generally gives rise to countless bickerings—a troupe of actors is engaged, and the vestibule of a local temple is made to undergo the metamorphosis necessary to the occasion. The very simple requirements of the Chinese stage make this a matter of easy arrangement. There is practically no scenery in a Chinese theatre. A few coarsely painted views hung at the back of the stage are all that is necessary to furnish it. The actors make their exits and entrances by a door at the side of these paintings, and the whole series of plays—for the performances go on for days together—are acted without any change of scenery. This has at first sight the advantage of simplicity, but it imposes on the characters the inconvenient necessity of explaining their individualities, and of describing their whereabouts. To us an awkward spectacle is presented when an actor comes forward and begins, "I am So-and-so, the son of Such-an-one," and then goes on to describe his trade, the members of his household, and everything which it is considered necessary for the audience to understand. Commonly, however, he prefaces these confidences by repeating a few lines of poetry, which are supposed to indicate the general tenor of the very complete explanation which is to follow. As each player treads the boards this formula is gone through.

Fortunately the characters are not numerous, and, as a rule, consist of the heavy father and

mother, a young lady of the nature of a heroine, a young man or two, a sprinkling of statesmen and courtiers in case the play is historical, with servants and attendants. For the most part the plots are quite straightforward, and no mystery is ever presented to tax the intelligence of the audience. With typical Chinese minuteness the motive, desires, and actions of the characters are fully explained, and the only people who are supposed to be mystified are either the personages in the play who are wronged, or the mandarins who are called upon to adjudicate on the crimes committed by the villains of the dramas. In all cases the action is direct, and is unhampered with any of those issues which add so much to the interest of Western performances. In a vast majority of cases the object of the play is to elevate virtue, and to hold up tyranny and wrong to just execration. The means adopted to these ends are not always such as to commend them in our eyes. The dialogue is often coarse, and the virtuous characters are commonly contemptible creatures. It is a peculiarity which runs through the whole of Chinese society that the utterances of high-sounding moral sayings and extremely virtuous platitudes are held to be quite sufficient to atone for heinous moral delinquencies and personal pusillanimity. Just as in real life imperial edicts and official proclamations abound with lofty sentiments and righteous phrases, while every word is falsified by the degraded and iniquitous actions of the writers, so an emperor on the stage yields to a barbarous foe without striking a blow for his country, but accompanies the action with so many fine words and lofty sentiments that he covers

himself with all the glory of a Black Prince at Crecy or a Henry V. on the field of Agincourt. In the same way a man breaks every commandment in the decalogue, but if he takes care at the same time to sprinkle his discourse with well-seasoned exhortations to the practice of filial piety, and the exercise of profound reverence for Confucius, he retires from the boards purged of all his offences, if not in the full odour of sanctity. This pharisaical sanctimoniousness to some extent runs through the farces and lighter pieces in which the people delight. Some of them are very comical, and might well be adapted for first pieces at our own theatres. In some we find incidents with which we are all familiar. For example, Desdemona's handkerchief reappears in a Peking farce, in which a jealous waterman finds fault with his wife for associating too constantly with a Buddhist priest—the disturbers of households are generally represented as priests. The lady suspects a friend of her husband of having instilled jealousy into her good man's mind, and induces him to quarrel with his associate. The friend being determined to prove the justice of his suspicions, watches for the priest, and catches him in the act of paying a clandestine visit to the lady. In the struggle which ensues the priest drops a handkerchief which had been given him by his inamorata. His opponent seizes the token and presents it to the husband, who recognizes it as one which he had given to his faithless consort. With a more discerning poetic justice than that which befell Desdemona, the priest and the lady in this case suffer an equally dire fate with that which overtook that unfortunate heroine. As seen,

however, on the Chinese stage, the native dramas have drawbacks other than those mentioned above. All the female parts are played by young men or boys, and the dialogue is constantly interrupted by lines of poetry which are sung, as are all Chinese songs, in a shrill falsetto. The musicians, also, are seated on the stage, and keep up so continuous an accompaniment as to make much of what the actors say inaudible. Not only do they accompany the songs, but on the expression of any lofty sentiment they come down with a crash of their instruments to add emphasis to the utterance. It has been said that these performances are given from a desire to do honour to the gods: but other excuses are very commonly found for indulgence in the pastime. On high days and festivals—at New-Year's time, often on the first and fifteenth of the month, and on other holidays—subscriptions are raised for the purpose of engaging troupes of actors who are always ready at hand. As a rule the theatres are of the Thespian kind, and if enclosed at all, are provided only with temporary coverings of mat, which are erected in a night, and can be demolished in a night. In surveying the general tendency of Chinese plays it cannot be said that it is elevating in character, and this is so far recognized that, though the drama is universally popular, and is patronized by the Court and by the leaders of the people, the actors are frowned upon and are officially regarded as pariahs of society. Neither they nor their sons are allowed to present themselves at the competitive examinations, and the doors of official life are thus closed to them. Not long since a memorial was presented to the

throne protesting against a certain man—the son of an actor—who had passed his examination being allowed a degree. No personal charge was brought against the man himself beyond that of having concealed his origin before the examiners, but his descent was fatal to him; his certificates were cancelled, and he was relegated to the outcast class from which he had sprung.

As a substitute for regular plays marionettes are very common, and are so manipulated as to express action with great cleverness. Figures of a smaller kind are similarly exhibited in peep-shows, which are frequently to be met with at street corners, and on the open spaces in front of the temples. As conjurers and acrobats the Chinese are very proficient, and often manage to introduce an amount of acting into their tricks which adds greatly to the effect produced. On one occasion the present writer witnessed the performance of a conjurer, who, with the help of a little boy, was showing off his skill in the Consular compound at Tientsin. The man made a cabbage to grow from a seed which he planted in the presence of his audience, he swallowed a sword, and, after doing a number of similar tricks, he inquired whether he should cut off his assistant's head. The answer being in the affirmative, the man turned to seize his victim, who, however, had fled on hearing the inhuman assent to his decapitation. After a keen and long pursuit he was, however, caught, and was led, struggling and weeping, to the block, to which he was pinioned. The conjurer then handed round his weapon that the keenness of the edge might be tested, and having taken up his position

dealt what seemed to be a fierce blow on the bare neck of the boy, at which, what appeared to be blood spurted out in all directions, and at the same instant that he drew a cloth over the quivering form he held aloft a dummy head, which bore just sufficient resemblance to the features of the lad to favour the illusion that he had indeed been butchered to make a Briton's holiday.

In the more occult arts of necromancy and enchantment Taoist priests are the acknowledged masters. From time immemorial these followers of Laotzŭ have, in popular belief, possessed the power of controlling the elements, of annihilating space, and of making themselves invisible. In one well-known historical battle a Taoist priest invoked such a storm of rain and hail in the face of the opposing forces that they fell easy victims to the swords of their adversaries. On another accepted occasion it is said that as a troop of coolies were carrying oranges to the capital, they were overtaken by a lame Taoist priest, who offered to ease them of their burdens, and who carried the whole quantity with the greatest ease for the rest of the journey. On arrival at the palace, however, the fruit were found to be hollow, and the coolies were only saved from condign punishment by the appearance of the priest, at whose word the oranges were again converted into rich and luscious fruit. Another well-known instance of supernatural power is that attributed to T'ieh Kwai, who possessed the power of projecting himself wheresoever he would. On one occasion the magician sent forth his inner self to the mountain of the gods. Before starting on his spiritual journey he left a disciple to watch over

his body, promising to return in seven days. Unfortunately, when six days had expired the watcher was called away to the death-bed of his mother, and being thus placed in a dilemma between his duties as a son, and his obligation to his friend, determined to carry the body of his master to his mother's home. Being there detained, he was unable to keep his tryst at the appointed time, and the disembodied spirit, finding that its earthly habitation had disappeared, was compelled, rather than suffer extinction, to enter the carcase of a beggar which lay by the roadside, and in this guise T'ieh Kwai passed the remainder of his existence.

Clairvoyance is largely practised, and on the principle that accumulated evidence proves the truth of a theory, it is difficult not to accept many of "the facts" stated by native eye-witnesses. Like our own professors of the art Chinese clairvoyants read the secret thoughts of their audiences, describe absent persons with minute accuracy, and by "crystal-gazing," and other means, are often said to be instrumental in detecting criminals, and in discovering the whereabouts of lost persons and things. The use of the planchette is very common, and though the Chinese, from their phlegmatic nature, are not easily subjected to magnetic influences, the effects produced are certainly remarkable.

As gymnasts they are in no way inferior to the best performers among ourselves, and it is not necessary to believe the wonderful stories told by early European travellers in China of the proficiency of native acrobats to credit them with noteworthy skill and agility. Even women possess unwonted power of strength and balance. But, above and

beyond all the other amusements of the Chinese, gambling holds a conspicuous place. Although, as already stated, it is strictly forbidden by law, it is winked at, and even encouraged by the authorities. It not unfrequently happens that magistrates even convert the outer rooms of their yamuns into gambling-houses, and share in the profits derived from the business. In every city these dens of corruption abound, and, as a rule, consist of two apartments. In the outer one the stakes are laid in copper cash, and in the inner room silver only is risked. Not content with the ordinary games of chance, such as those afforded by cards, roulette and other tables, the ingenuity of the people is exercised in inventing new means of losing their money. When there are no examinations to be decided and wagered on, the proprietor of a gambling-house will sometimes take a sheet of paper on which are inscribed eighty characters, and having marked twenty, will deposit it in a box. Copies of the sheet bearing the same eighty characters are distributed among gamblers whose supreme object it is to mark the same twenty characters as those on the sheet in the box. When all the papers have been received, the box which contains the overseer's paper, and which stands conspicuously on the table, is unlocked. If a gambler has marked only four of the characters selected by the overseer, he receives nothing. If he has marked five of them, he receives seven cash; if six, seventy cash; if eight, seven dollars; and if ten, fifteen dollars.* In the streets the same spirit of speculation flourishes, and every itinerant vendor of eatables,

* Archdeacon Gray's "China," vol. i. p. 390.

whether of fried locusts, sweets, or the more satisfying rice with fish or vegetables, keeps a set of dice for the use of those customers who prefer to run the risk of winning their meals for nothing, or of losing both their money and their food, to paying the ordinary price for their viands. In dwelling-houses cards are everywhere played, and to the ladies they supply an inexhaustible source of amusement. The cards are smaller and more numerous than in our packs, and lend themselves to an endless variety of games.

CHAPTER XXV.

COINS AND ART.

THE coinage of China, like every other institution of the Flowery Land, has two aspects—the one that which it professes to be, and the other that which it really is. Strange as it may seem, the Chinese have only one coin, which is known to them as *ch'ien*, and to us as cash. In value a cash professes to be about one-tenth of a halfpenny, but as a matter of fact it varies in almost every district, and it is even not at all uncommon to find two kinds of cash current in one neighbourhood. In some parts of the country people "go to market with two entirely distinct sets of cash, one of which is the ordinary mixture of good and bad, and the other is composed exclusively of counterfeit pieces. Certain articles are paid for with the spurious cash only. But in regard to other commodities this is a matter of special bargain, and accordingly there is for these articles a double market price."* Independently, again, of the confusion arising from the use of genuine and counterfeit coins side by side, is added the uncertainty due to the system of counting. A hundred cash means varying numbers, other than

* "Chinese Characteristics," by A. H. Smith, p. 173.

a hundred, which are determined by the usage of each locality. A stranger, therefore, is liable to suffer loss at the hands of tradespeople, who still further complicate matters by almost invariably naming a higher price for each article than that which they are prepared to accept. The weight of any considerable sum in cash is an additional objection to these most inconvenient coins. A dollar's worth of cash weighs about eight pounds, and the transportation of any large sum in specie is, therefore, a serious matter. For the purpose of carriage the cash are made with square holes in the centre, by means of which they are strung in nominal hundreds and thousands. It is obvious, of course, that for the purchase of anything commanding more than a very low value some other currency must be employed, and this is supplied by lumps of silver, the values of which are in every case tested by the scales. In common parlance the price of goods is reckoned at so many taels weight, a tael being, roughly speaking, the equivalent of an ounce, and for the sake of general convenience silver is cast into "shoes," as they are called from their shape, weighing a specified number of taels or ounces. For smaller amounts than are contained in a "shoe," broken pieces of silver are used, but in every case the value is reckoned, not by the piece, but by the weight. In strict accuracy even the cash is undeserving the name of coin, since instead of being moulded it is roughly cast, and both in design and manufacture does little credit to a nation which is unquestionably possessed of a large share of artistic taste. Of late the Governor-general of Canton has established a mint at that city, at which

he coins both gold and silver tokens. These, however, pass current only in the locality, and so far the imperial Government has shown no inclination to follow the excellent example set by this satrap. For many centuries bank bills and notes have been issued at the well-established banks in the principal centres of commerce, and during the Mongol dynasty the central Government introduced the practice of issuing imperial notes to the people. A note which was passed into currency during the reign of an emperor of the succeeding Ming dynasty, who reigned from 1368 to 1399, is exhibited in a show-case in the King's Library in the British Museum, and is a specimen of the oldest note which is known to exist. Its date carries us back long before the general adoption of bank-notes in Europe, and three hundred years before the establishment of the Stockholm bank, which was the first bank in Europe to issue notes. At the present time notes are largely used at Peking, but the very uncertain state of the currency renders a large depreciation inevitable, and makes tradespeople sometimes unwilling to accept them.

Imperfect and undeveloped though it is, the coinage of China has a very long ancestry, and can trace its descent from about 2000 B.C. One of the earliest shapes which the coins took was that of a knife, no doubt in imitation of the real weapon, which was early used as a medium of exchange. These knife coins originally consisted of the blade and handle, the last of which was terminated in a round end which was pierced in imitation of the article which they were intended to represent. By degrees the blade became shortened, until it entirely

disappeared. The handle next suffered diminution, and eventually the round end with a hole in the centre was all that was left, and it is that which is perpetuated at the present day in the modern cash.

The prominence which the artists of Japan have of late acquired, and the very inferior specimens of Chinese work which now commonly reach our shores, have blinded people to the real merits of the pictorial art of China. We are not now speaking of the common brightly coloured paintings on rice-paper which are brought from Canton by travellers, but of the works of men who paint, and have painted, for the love of the art, and not only for the taels they can earn by their brushes. A few years ago a magnificent collection of Japanese paintings was exhibited at the British Museum, and was arranged in such a manner as to show that the art of China and Japan is one. For this purpose the paintings were arranged chronologically, beginning with some early specimens of Chinese art, and leading up to the time when the Japanese learned the use of the brush from their more cultivated neighbours. A comparison of the pictures thus displayed was enough to prove to demonstration that the artistic flame which has burned so brightly in Japan was lit by the genius of Chinese masters. The same marked and peculiar features characterize the arts of the two countries. In both the power of representing with fidelity birds, fishes, and flowers is remarkable, and an exquisite skill in harmonizing colours, and of giving life and vigour to forms, distinguishes the works of artists on both shores of the Yellow Sea. In like manner the same faults are observable in both schools. Perspective is

commonly defective, the anatomy of the human form is entirely misunderstood, and the larger animals, such as horses and cattle, suffer distortion at the hands of the artists. One noticeable feature in the technicalities of the art is the absence of shadow, the effect of which is produced by such skilful drawing that the omission is scarcely observed. As in the case of every fine art in China, the most precise rules are laid down to guide the painter, and the effect is observable in a certain uniformity in pictures of landscapes and in the groupings of figures. The ideal landscape of the guide-books consists of a cloud-capped mountain, in the bosom of which a temple nestles surrounded by trees, one of which must be a weeping willow. On a rocky eminence should stand a gaunt and bowed pine-tree. Near this must be a waterfall crossed by a rustic bridge, forming a link in a winding path which leads up to the temple, while in the far distance should be seen sailing-boats wending their ways on the much-winding river which flows round the foot of the mountain. The addition of a couple of aged chess-players seated under a willow tree on a prominent plateau on the side of the hill is recommended as being likely to give life to the scene. In two branches of their art Chinese draughtsmen may be said especially to excel. In the certainty with which they draw their outlines they are probably unmatched, except by the Japanese, and in the beauty of their miniature painting they have few equals. The skilful use of his brush which every schoolboy has to gain in copying the hieroglyphic characters of the language accustoms him to sketch forms with accuracy, and gives him an assured

confidence in the drawing of his outlines. As, in addition, he is habituated to the use of Indian ink instead of lead pencils, he is aware that in his work *vestigia nulla retrorsum*, and that a false line must always remain against him as evidence of his want of skill. The mastery thus acquired gives him that wonderful power of unfalteringly expressing on paper the scenes he wishes to delineate which so often excites the astonishment of European draughtsmen. This practice with the brush stands the miniature painter in equally good stead, and enables him to lay on his colours with such certainty, and with so unfailing a steadiness of hand and eye, that he is able to represent with clearness, and often with exquisite beauty, patterns of microscopic minuteness. No better specimen of this last phase of the art can be instanced than the best examples of painting on porcelain. For delicacy of touch and richness of colouring these are often masterpieces, and possess a beauty which must charm every tutored eye.

According to tradition the first beginnings of art in China are to be traced back many centuries before Christ, and were devoted, as in all primitive societies, to the adornment of the palaces of kings and the houses of the great nobles. If historians are to be trusted, the rude efforts of these early artists bore traces of the characteristics which have marked so distinctly the later developments of the art. The introduction of Buddhism, with its religious mysteries, its sacred biographies, and its miraculous legends, supplied a fresh motive to the artists of China, who at once caught the inspiration, although they treated the subjects after the marked national

manner. In the troublous period which succeeded the fall of the Han dynasty (A.D. 220), art, like all the other accomplishments which flourish best in times of peace, fell into decay, and it was not until the establishment of the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618)—the golden age of literature and culture—that art occupied again its true prominence in the estimation of the people.

It is at this period that we find the objects of nature represented with the fidelity and skill with which we are familiar in Chinese work. Throwing aside the martial notions of the earliest masters, and the religious ideas imported from India, the native artists sought their subjects in the fields and woods, on the mountain side and by the river's bank. They transferred to their canvases the landscapes which met their eyes, the flowers which grew around them, the birds as they flew or perched, and the fishes as they darted and swam in the clear water of the streams. These they depicted with the minuteness common to their craft, and rivalled in life-like rendering the work of the celebrated Ts'ao (A.D. 240), of whom it is said that, "having painted a screen for his sovereign, he carelessly added the representation of a fly to the picture, and that so perfect was the illusion that on receiving the screen Sun K'üan raised his hand to brush the insect away."* As time advanced the lamp of art again grew dim, and it required the fresh impetus of a new dynasty to revive its brilliancy. The Sung dynasty (A.D. 960–1278) was rich in philosophers, poets, and painters, and while Chu Hi wrote metaphysical treatises, and the brothers Su sung of

* "Chinese Reader's Manual," p. 229.

wine and the beauties of nature, Ma Yuen, Muh Ki, Li Lungyen, and a host of others painted birds and flowers, landscapes and figures, dragons and monkeys, together with all kinds of other beasts which walk on the face of the earth, or are supposed to do so.

With the rise to power of the Mongol dynasty (1260) the taste for the religious art of India revived, but did not eclipse the expression on canvas of that love of nature for which both the Chinese and Japanese are so conspicuous. But still painting did not reach the high level to which it had attained in the earlier periods, and as of every other institution of China, we are obliged to say of the pictorial art, "the old is better." During the last dynasty, however, there were artists whose power of colouring was as great or even greater than that of any of their predecessors, so far as we are able to judge. With infinite skill and minute realism they painted figures in a way which commands just admiration. In the British Museum there are exhibited some specimens of this branch of the art which undoubtedly display great power of composition and infinite skill in the art of colouring. As a rule, however, the colouring of Chinese pictures, though always harmonious, is somewhat arbitrary and leaves on the eye an unpleasant feeling of flatness. In sense of humour the Chinese are certainly inferior to the Japanese. There is not in their work the same fertility of invention or happy choice of ideas as are to be found on the other side of the Yellow Sea. But Chinamen are not by any means devoid of this quality, and in many of their albums we find comic

sketches reminding one irresistibly, though at a distance, of the masterpieces of Leech. The absence of the use of chiaroscuro deprives the Chinese portrait-painter of the full power of presenting life-like representations of his models, more especially as he almost invariably draws full-face portraits. When by chance, however, he strikes off a side face the effect is often good and the likeness accurate. But in any circumstances the artistic feeling is there, and it needs but the touch of a torch from a higher civilization to make this and other branches of the art glow into more perfect life.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE RELIGIONS OF CHINA.

RELIGIOUS sentiment is not a characteristic of the Chinese. Their views on the subject of faith are wanting in definitiveness, and are so indistinct and blurred that it might surpass the wit of man to determine what is the prevailing religion of the country. The multitude of Buddhist temples which cover the face of the land might naturally suggest that the majority of the people profess the religion of Buddha; while conversations with native scholars would unquestionably lead one to believe that the educated classes were to a man Confucianists. Taoism, the third religion which holds sway in China, does not make the same pretension to popularity as do the other two faiths. As a matter of fact, however, it would probably be difficult to find many Chinamen who are Confucianists pure and simple, or many who rest contented with the worship provided in Buddhist temples. A combination of the two—an amalgam in which the materialism of Confucius and the religious faith of Sakyamuni mutually supplement one another—enters into the life of the people at large; while Taoism supplies a certain amount of superstitious lore which these lack. It is necessary to remark

by way of caution that the term "religion" applied to Confucianism is rather a popular than an exact form of expression. Religion implies the dependence of man on a Deity, and if we apply this definition to the doctrines of Confucius, we find that it in no way represents the teachings of that philosopher. His whole system is devoted to inculcating the duty which each man owes to his fellow-men, and stops short with the obligations under which every one rests in his relation to society. Of these three systems Confucianism is the only one which took its rise on the soil of China. The other two faiths came, as have most of those influences which have modified the institutions of China, from beyond the western frontiers of the empire. Confucianism, however, was formulated by one man, who was essentially a typical Chinaman both in the strength and weakness of his character.

In the year 551 B.C., Confucius was born in what is now the department of Yenchow, in the province of Shantung. Legend surrounds his birth with many of the signs and wonders which are commonly said to herald the appearance of Eastern sages. We are told that the future uncrowned king first saw the light in a cavern on Mount Ni, and that while two goddesses breathed fragrant odours on the infant, a couple of dragons kept watch during the auspicious night at the foot of the mountain. His appearance was not prepossessing. He had the lips of an ox, the back of a dragon, while on his head grew a formation which earned for him the name of Ch'iu, "a mound." As the lad grew up he developed that taste for ritual which was the marked characteristic of his whole career. Like

Saint Athanasius on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, he amused himself in early boyhood by rehearsing the sacrificial rites, and by practising the postures of ceremony prescribed by the older rituals. At the age of fifteen he tells us that he "bent his mind to learning," and four years later he married a lady who, like the wives of many other celebrated men, was a thorn in the flesh to her husband. Confucius endured the burden without complaint until his wife had borne him a son, when he sought release from his bondage at the hands of the very complaisant marital laws of the country.

The literature of China at this time was limited in extent, and consisted mainly of the historical records and popular ballads which were to be found in the royal archives. To a study of these Confucius devoted such time as he could spare from his official duties as keeper of the royal stores, and from the hours which he devoted to the instruction of a faithful band of students who, even at this time, had gathered round him. When he was twenty-nine "he stood firm," and certainly neither at this time nor at any subsequent period did his faith in his own convictions show the least sign of faltering. His circumstances were not affluent. An official life was, therefore, necessary to his existence, and he had no sooner equipped himself with a full panoply of ritualistic knowledge than he cast about to find a ruling sovereign who would be willing to guide the policy of the kingdom by his counsel. He was essentially a man of peace, and his opinions were such as required a period of undisturbed calm for their full development. The times, however, were against him. It was an age of war, when the

hand of every one was against his neighbour, and when the strength of the right arm commanded more respect than wisdom in council. Sovereign after sovereign, attracted by the novelty of his teachings and the repute which was already beginning to attach itself to him, invited him to their courts, and for a time gave heed to the words of wisdom which fell from his lips. But their hearts were not with him, and more material attractions were apt to prevail over the sayings of the sage. On one occasion the present of a number of beautiful singing girls so captivated the attention of the Duke of Lu that the advice of Confucius was neither sought nor regarded. Disgusted by this affront, the sage shook the dust of the state from his feet and transferred his services to a rival ruler. On another occasion he was driven from the Court of Wei, where he had established himself, by the undue preference shown by the duke for the society of the duchess to that of himself.

As he advanced in years his political influence declined, and his stay at the regal courts became shorter and less satisfactory than formerly. At the age of sixty-nine his health failed, and the capture of a Lin—a fabulous animal which is said to appear as a forerunner of the death of illustrious personages —was effected at the same time. In the dearth of notable personages which had overtaken the land the appearance of these animals was of such rare occurrence that the huntsmen were ignorant of its identity. The sage, however, at once recognized the creature, and, with that full appreciation of himself which never failed him, he at once came to the conclusion that his own end was near. "The

course of my doctrine is run," he said, as tears coursed down his cheeks. An interval, however, elapsed between the omen and its fulfilment, and the two years which yet remained to him he devoted to the compilation of the "Spring and Autumn Annals"—the only work which is attributable to his pen. His end now approached, and one morning he was heard to mutter, as he paced up and down in front of his door, "The great mountain must crumble, the strong beam must break, and the wise man wither away like a plant." In these words his disciples recognized the foreshadowing of his death, and the sage, disappointed in every one but himself, and filled with unavailing regrets that there should have been no intelligent monarch who would have made him his guide, philosopher, and friend, shortly took to his bed and died (479 B.C.). As in the case of many of the great leaders of mankind, the fame and repute which were denied to Confucius during his lifetime have been fully and generously recognized by posterity, who have attached to every word he uttered, and to every act of his life, an importance and meaning to which, it must be allowed, they are not always entitled.

Confucius was not an original thinker. He uttered no new thoughts and enunciated no new doctrines. He himself said that he was "a transmitter," and the one object of his life was, as he professed, to induce the rulers of the land to revert to the ideal system which guided the councils of the semi-mythical sovereigns Yao and Shun (B.C. 2356–2205). In the adulatory State Records, to which Confucius had access, the good that these monarchs did was embalmed for the admiration of posterity, but the

evil, if there were such, was interred with their bones. The stilted sayings and highly moral reflections which are attributed to them in the Book of History and other Records, appeared to Confucius to be the acme of wisdom, and he sought a remedy for all the political ills which surrounded him in the reproduction of the condition of things which prevailed at the earlier period. His leading dogma was the comfortable doctrine that man is born good, and that it is only by contamination with the world and the things of the world that he is led to depart from the strict paths of rectitude and virtue. It was only necessary, therefore, for a sovereign to give full vent to his natural strivings after good to enable him to emulate the glowing examples of Yao and Shun. He made no allowance for the evil passions and moral turpitudes which disgrace mankind, and he entirely failed to recognize that "there is a power that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." On the contrary, he held that man was alone arbiter of his own fate, and that by a strict regard to conventionalities, and by the careful observance of the rites proper between man and man, it was possible to attain to such a height of wisdom and righteousness as to constitute an equality with Heaven itself.

His system, therefore, began with the cultivation of the individual, and this was to be perfected by a strict observance of the minutest details of conduct. In his own person he set an illustrious example of how a great and good man should demean himself. He cultivated dignity of manner and scrupulous respect to those to whom respect was due. When he entered the palace of his sovereign he walked

with a bent head and humble mien, and towards parents he inculcated throughout his career the duty of paying minute obedience and the most affectionate attention to their every wish and command. In the manner in which he took his food, in the way in which he dressed, even in the attitude in which he lay in bed, he set himself up as an example for all men to follow. People, he believed, were as grass before the wind, and that if they were bent by the influence of a superior in a certain direction, they would naturally follow that inclination. That the example of the sovereign was as the wind, and that he had but to allow his virtue to shine forth to ensure the reformation of the whole State. Such a man "would plant the people, and forthwith they would be established; he would lead them on, and forthwith they would follow him; he would make them happy, and forthwith multitudes would resort to his dominions; he would stimulate them, and forthwith they would be harmonious. While he lived, he would be glorious. When he died, he would be bitterly lamented." * Such a sovereign need but to exist and an age of peace and prosperity would settle on the land. When therefore, a state was disturbed and rebellious, the main fault was not to be attributed to the people, but to the sovereign who ruled them; and hence it followed that the duties of ruler and people were reciprocal, and that while the people owed respect and obedience to virtuous sovereigns, they were exempt from the duty of loyalty to rulers who had departed from the paths of virtue.

According to his theory, it was an easy matter for a sovereign to rule his people righteously. "Self-

* "Analects," chap. xix. (Legg's translation).

adjustment and purification, with careful regulation of his dress and the not making a movement contrary to the rules of propriety—this is the way for the ruler to cultivate his person." * Having cultivated his own person, he is able to rule the empire, and Confucius could find no excuse, therefore, for a sovereign who failed to fulfil these very easy conditions.

In such a system there is no room for a personal Deity, and Confucius withheld all sanction to the idea of the existence of such a Being. He refused to lift his eyes above the earth or to trouble himself about the future beyond the grave. "When we know so little about life," was his reply to an inquisitive disciple, "how can we know anything about death?" and the best advice he could give his followers with regard to spiritual beings was to keep them at a distance. But while ignoring all direct supernatural interference in the concerns of man, he advocated the highest morality among his followers. Truth and Sincerity, Righteousness and Virtue were the main themes of his discourses, and though he himself failed on all occasions to observe the truth, he yet professed and felt the greatest respect and regard for that virtue. He was a plain, unimaginative man, but used the mundane weapons at his command with mighty and far-reaching effect. Once only he reached to the high level of perfect Christianity, and in the enunciation of the command, "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others," he surpassed himself. From his limited standpoint he had no future bliss to offer to his followers as a reward for virtue, nor any punishments

* Legge's "Prolegomena," p. 108.

after death with which to awe those who were inclined to depart from the paths of rectitude. His teaching was of the earth, earthy, and as such was exactly suited to the commonplace, matter-of-fact tone of the Chinese mind. And thus it has come about that, though, during his lifetime, his influence was confined to a small knot of faithful disciples, his system has since been accepted as the guiding star of the national policy and conduct.

Confucius was not the only teacher of note who appeared about this time to warn the people of the probable consequences of the violence and misrule which was spreading over the empire like a flood. For many centuries men calling themselves Taoists, who were plainly imbued with the philosophical mysticism of Brahminical India, had preached the vanity of attempting to stem the tide of disorder, and had, like the Manichæans, withdrawn as far as possible from the crowd of men into selfish retirement. The views of these men were vague and shadowy, and it was not until the appearance of Laotzŭ, who was a contemporary of but senior to Confucius, that their aspirations found expression in a formulated system. In almost every respect Laotzŭ, or the old philosopher, was poles asunder from Confucius. Of his childhood and youth we know nothing, and, unlike Confucius, whose every act of daily life is faithfully recorded, we are left in complete ignorance of his personal history until we meet him as an old man, holding the office of keeper of the records at the Court of Chow. We are told that his surname was Li, and that his personal name was Urh, which is, being interpreted, "an ear"—a sobriquet which is said to have been given him on

account of the unusually large size of those organs. His birth, we are told, took place in the year 604 B.C., at the village of Chüjên, or "Oppressed Benevolence," in the parish of Li, or "Cruelty," in the district of K'u, or "Bitterness," and in the state of Ts'u, or "Suffering." If these places were as mythical as John Bunyan's "City of Destruction" and "Vanity Fair," their names could not have been more appropriately chosen to designate the birthplace of a sage who was driven from office and from friends by the disorders of the time. It is remarkable that the description of his large ears and general appearance tallies accurately with those of the non-Chinese tribes on the western frontiers of the empire. His surname, Li, also reminds one of the large and important tribe of that name which was dispossessed by the invading Chinese, and was driven to seek refuge in what is now South-Western China. But however that may be, it is impossible to overlook the fact that he imported into his teachings a decided flavour of Indian philosophy.

His main object was to explain to his followers the relations between the universe and that which he called Tao. The first meaning of this word is, "The way," but in the teachings of Laotzŭ it was much more than that. "It was the way and the waygoer. It was an eternal road; along it all beings and all things walked, but no being made it, for it is being itself; it was everything and nothing, and the cause and effect of all. All things originated from Tao, conformed to Tao, and to Tao they at last returned."* Like Confucius, Laotzŭ held that the nature of man was originally good, but from

* "Confucianism and Taoism," by the author.

that point their systems diverged. In place of the formalities and ceremonies which were the corner-stones of the Confucian cult, Laotzŭ desired to bring his followers back to the state of simplicity before the absence of the virtues which Confucius lauded had forced on the minds of men the consciousness of their existence. He would have them revert to a halcyon period when filial piety, virtue, and righteousness belonged to the nature of the people, and before the recognition of their opposites made it necessary to designate them. Instead of asserting themselves, he urged his disciples to strive after self-emptiness. His favourite illustration was that of water, which seeks the lowliest spots, but which at the same time permeates everything, and by its constant dropping pierces even the hardest substances. By practising modesty, humility, and gentleness, men may, he taught, hope to walk safely on the path which leads to Tao, and protected by those virtues they need fear no evil. To such men it requires no more effort to keep themselves pure and uncontaminated than it does to the pigeon to preserve untarnished the whiteness of its feathers, or to the crow to maintain the sable hue of its pinions.

Tao was the negation of effort. It was inactive, and yet left nothing undone. It was formless, and yet the cause of form. It was still and void. It changed not, and yet it circulated everywhere. It was impalpable and invisible. It was the origin of heaven and earth, and it was the mother of all things. To such a prophet as Laotzŭ war was hateful, and he inculcated the duty of turning the other cheek to the smiter, and of retreating before all forms of violence. Unlike Confucius, he advocated

the duty of recompensing evil with good, and injury with kindness; but he joined hands with that sage in ignoring the existence of a personal Deity. Tao was all and in all. It was "unconditioned being, which, as an abstraction too subtle for words, is the origin of heaven and earth, including God Himself; and, when capable of being expressed by name, is the mother of all things." * It was a mighty protector who guarded its faithful sons against every evil. It did not strive with man, but let each one who strayed from its paths find out for himself the evil consequences of his acts.

As a political system Taoism was plainly impracticable. If the Chinese state and the surrounding nations could have been converted bodily to it, an ideal such as Laotzŭ sketched out may have found a place in existence. But in camps and amid the clash of arms its adoption was plainly incompatible with the existence of a nation, and Laotzŭ, finding that his preaching fell on deaf ears, resigned his missionary effort, and, leaving China behind him, started in a westerly direction—whither we know not. No record has come down to us of his last days, nor have we any more knowledge of where death overtook him than we have of his origin. As a meteor he flashed across the meridian of China, and then disappeared into darkness.

A comparison of the doctrines advocated by Laotzŭ with the Brahminic philosophy as expounded, for instance, in the Upanishads, proves to demonstration that he drew his inspiration from India. The Tao of Laotzŭ as expounded in the *Taotêching*, a work which is popularly attributed to him, was

* "Confucianism and Taoism," by the author.

the Brahma of the Brahmins, from which everything emanates and to which everything returns; "which is both the fountain from which the stream of life breaks forth and the ocean into which it hastens to lose itself."* The whole conception of the system was foreign to the Chinese mind, and his personal influence was no sooner withdrawn from his disciples than heresies cropped up and debased views took the place of the singularly pure and subtle metaphysical thoughts of the teacher. The doctrine that life and death were mere phases in the existence of man encouraged the growth of an epicurean longing to enjoy the good things of life in oblivion of the hereafter. This tendency led to an inordinate desire to prolong life, and there were not wanting among the followers of Laotzŭ those who professed to have gained the secret of immortality. Several of the reigning sovereigns, attracted by these heterodox views, professed themselves Taoists; and even Chi Hwangti, the builder of the Great Wall, fell a victim to the prevailing superstition. More than once he sent expeditions to the Eastern Isles to procure the plant of immortality, which was said to flourish in those favoured spots. Death and poverty have always been states abhorrent to common humanity, and to the elixir of immortality, Taoist priests, in the interests of the cause, added a further conquest over nature, and professed to have fathomed the secret of being able to transmute common metals into gold. These are superstitions which die hard, and even at the present day alchemists are to be found poring over crucibles in the vain hope of being able

* "Three Lectures on Buddhism," by Rev. E. J. Eitel.

to secure to themselves boundless wealth; and seekers after magic herbs, though hesitating to promise by their use an endless life, yet attribute to them the virtue of prolonging youth and of delaying the approach of the time when "the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened."

Coupled with these corruptions came a desire for visible objects of worship, and, following the example of the Buddhists, the Taoists deified Laotzŭ, and associated two other gods with him to form a trinity. The establishment of these deities gave rise to a demand for new gods to personify the various personal wants and wishes of the people. At the present day a Taoist temple is a veritable Pantheon, and it is scarcely possible to imagine a craving on the part of either man or woman for which there is not a particular god or goddess whose province it is to listen to their cries. Thus the whole tendency of modern Taoism has been towards the practice of magic and the most debased superstitions. If a man desires that his horoscope should be cast, or that the demon of disease should be expelled from the body of his wife or child, or that a spirit should be called from the other world, or that the perpetrator of a theft or murder should be discovered, a Taoist priest is invariably sent for, who, by the exercise of his arts, succeeds in so far mystifying the inquirer as to satisfy his demands. These preyers on the follies of their fellow-men reap so rich a harvest from the practice of their rites and incantations, that the calling is one that is eagerly sought after. Being thus largely supported, the Taoist hierarchy has grown

into a large and powerful body, and is presided over by a high priest, who is chosen for the office by divine selection from a certain family bearing the name of Chang, among whom the spiritual afflatus is supposed to rest. This ecclesiastic lives surrounded by wealth and dignity, and at stated intervals presents himself at Peking to offer his allegiance to the emperor. As agreeable supplements to their monasteries, the Taoist priests encourage the establishment of nunneries, into which young girls retreat, either at the bidding of their parents or of their own free choice as a means of escape from the uncertainties of marriage or from the miseries of their homes. Such retreats are not always the abodes of purity and peace, and, as occasionally has happened, the occurrence of disorders and improprieties has compelled the law to interfere for their suppression. The descent from the lofty aspirations of Laotzŭ to the magic, jugglery, and superstition of the modern-day Taoists is probably as great a fall as has ever been recorded in the history of religions. Laotzŭ attempted to lead his disciples beyond the attractions of self and the seductions of the world. His so-called followers devote their energies to encouraging the debased superstitions of their fellow-men, and so batten on their follies.

But there are instinctive longings in the minds of men, even in those of Chinamen, which neither Confucianism, nor Taoism in its earlier phase, could supply. Deep down in the hearts of civilized and uncivilized peoples is a desire to peer into the future, and to seek for verities beyond the limited circle of pains and miseries which bounds the

present life. To Chinamen this want was supplied by Buddhism, which was introduced into the Flowery Land by native missionaries from India. So early as 219 B.C. the first forerunners of the faith of Sakyamuni reached the Chinese capital of Loyang. But the time was not ripe for their venture. The stoical followers of Confucius and Laotzŭ presented a determined and successful opposition to them, and, after a chequered experience of Chinese prisons and courts, they disappeared from the scene, leaving no traces of their faith behind them. In A.D. 61 a second mission arrived in China, whose members met with a far more favourable reception. A settled government had followed the time of disorder which had previously prevailed, and, though the Confucianists raged and persecuted, the missionaries held their own, and succeeded in laying the solid foundation of a faith which was destined, in later ages, to overspread the whole empire. Even at this early period a schism had rent the Church in India, where the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools had already divided the allegiance of the followers of Buddha. The Hīnayāna school, which held more closely to the moral asceticism and self-denying, self-sacrificing charity which were preached by the founder of the faith, established itself more especially among the natives of Southern India and of Ceylon. The Mahāyāna school, on the other hand, which may be described as a philosophical system which found expression in an elaborate ritual, an idolatrous symbolism, and in ecstatic meditation, gained its main supporters among the more hardy races of Northern India, Nepal, and Tibet.

It was this last form of the faith which found

acceptance in China. It supplied exactly that which Confucianism and Taoism lacked, and, notwithstanding the opposition of the stalwarts of the Confucian doctrine, it spread rapidly and gained the ready adhesion of the people. And though the missionaries sanctioned the deification of Buddha and the worship of gods, they still maintained the main features of the faith. The doctrine of Metempsychosis, the necessity of gaining perfect emancipation from all passions, all mental phenomena, and, greatest of all, from self, were preached in season and out of season, and gained a firm hold among their proselytes. It is the fate of all religions to degenerate in course of ages from the purity of their origins, and Buddhism in China affords an illustrious example of this phenomenon. Not content with the liberal share of superstition which was sanctioned by the Mahāyāna system, the people turned aside to the later Tantra school in search of a sanction for still more fanatical practices. Like the Taoists, the Buddhist monks professed to be adepts in the arts of magic, and claimed to themselves the power of being able to banish famine, remove pestilence, and drive away evil spirits, by their incantations. They posed as astrologers and exorcists, and made dupes of the people from the highest to the lowest.

With the choice before them of a holy life, from which desire and self are wholly eradicated, and a religious profession which ministers to the senses and to the ordinary intelligence, the modern Chinese have had no hesitation in throwing in their lot with the more mundane school. With the five commandments of Buddha, "thou shalt not kill;

thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit any unchaste act; thou shalt not lie; thou shalt not drink any intoxicating liquor," the ordinary Chinese Buddhist does not much concern himself. He clings, however, to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and though he not uncommonly lapses into the sin of eating meat and fish, yet his diet for the most part is, to his credit it must be said, confined to the Lenten fare of vegetables and grain. In all religious works this dogma is strenuously insisted on, and even in popular literature authors not infrequently picture the position of men who, by the mercy of Buddha, have narrowly escaped from the sin of devouring their best friends in the guise of a carp or a ragout. The plain and undisguised adoption of idolatry by the Chinese made the existence of temples a first necessity, and at the present time these sacred edifices are to be found wherever men meet and congregate, whether in the streets of cities or in village lanes. Among the countless idols which adorn their halls the first places are invariably given to the trinity of Buddhas—the past Buddha, the present Buddha, and the Buddha which is to come. These three figures dominate the principal hall of every temple. In rear of this is commonly a dagoba in which is concealed a relic of Buddha—it may be the paring of a nail, a tear-drop, or a lock of hair—and at the back of that again are the deities which are supposed to preside over all the ills that flesh is heir to.

As is the case everywhere, women are the most constant devotees, and on the pedestals of the favourite deities are commonly to be seen scores

of votive offerings expressing the gratitude of these worshippers for mercies vouchsafed to them. But there is a reverse side to the shield from the gods' point of view. It not unfrequently happens that deities who, either from forgetfulness or malevolence, have turned a deaf ear to the prayers of suppliants, are violently assaulted and defaced. In 1892 at Foochow, where a long drought had wrought havoc among the neighbouring farms, the people rose against the god of sickness, who was supposed to be the cause of the plague, and having made a paper junk bearing a paper effigy of the offending deity, they launched him on the river at the same moment that they set fire to the vessel. This emblematized banishment was supposed to do away with the evil influences which had prevailed, and the showers which subsequently fell were held fully to justify the exemplary rite. Strictly speaking, the term "priest" does not apply to Buddhists. They offer no sacrifice to the gods, but are merely monks who perform services and pronounce incantations for the benefit of their followers. The practice of contemplative meditation, which is one of the features of the Mahāyāna school, has multiplied these social drones by directly encouraging the establishment of monasteries and their allied nunneries. Each monastery is governed by an abbot, who has the power of inflicting punishment on offending brothers, and the discipline commonly preserved is in direct ratio to the vigilance and conscientiousness of that functionary. If the popular belief is to be accepted, neither the discipline nor the morality of the monasteries is above suspicion, and in popular farces and tales the character who

appears in the most compromising positions, and is discovered in the perpetration of the most disgraceful acts, is commonly a Buddhist priest. Outwardly, however, an air of peace and decorum is preserved, and there is seldom a lack of aspirants for the sacred office when vacancies occur. Commonly the neophytes join as mere boys, having been devoted to the service of Buddha by their parents. At other times a less innocent cause supplies candidates for the cowl. Like sanctuary of old, Buddhist monasteries are held to be places of refuge for malefactors, and of this very raw and unpromising material a large proportion of the monks are made. But from whatever motive he may join, the neophyte, on entering, having discarded his secular garments, and donned the gown and cowl of the monkhood, marks his separation from the world by submitting to the loss of his queue and to the shaving of his head. The duties of the monks are not laborious, and they enjoy in the refectory good though plain food. In the nunneries, which are almost as numerous as monasteries, much the same routine is followed as is practised by the monks. The evil of the system is, however, more apparent in the sisterhoods than in the monasteries, and a bad reputation for all kinds of improprieties clings to them.

It must not, however, be supposed that there is no such thing as religious zeal among Buddhist monks. Mendicant friars often endure hardships, practise austerities, and undergo self-inflicted tortures in the cause of their religion. Others banish themselves to mountain caves, or condemn themselves to perpetual silence to acquire that virtue which

ensures to them an eternal life in the blissful regions of the west. But such cases are the exceptions, and to the majority of both monks and nuns the old saying applies, "The nearer the church the further from God."

Such is, stated briefly, the position of the three principal religions in China. Both Mahommedanism and Christianity have their followings; but the numbers of their adherents are so comparatively small that, at present, they cannot be said to influence in any way the life of the nation. Meanwhile the people, disregarding the distinctive features of the three creeds—Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism—take from each such tenets and rites as suit their immediate views and necessities, and superadding numerous superstitious observances which have existed from before the time when Confucius and Laotzŭ were, have established a religious *pot-pourri* which, happily, satisfies all the needs of which they are conscious. Many of the forms employed to commemorate the annual festivals have in them that touch of nature-worship which makes the whole primitive world kin. In the seventh month, for example, a festival in honour of a star-goddess, famous for her skill in embroidery, is held, at which young girls display specimens of needlework, and offer up supplications before the altar of the goddess, praying that a share of her skill may be bestowed upon them. At the same time, to show that they are worthy disciples of the deity, they attempt on their knees to thread their needles, held above their heads, to the accompaniment of music discoursed by blind musicians. The moon is worshipped in the eighth month, and moon-cakes,

especially prepared for the occasion, are offered by the light of her beams in adoration of the goddess. The sun also comes in for his share of adoration. To these and similar celebrations Buddhism lends its countenance, and on the eighth of the fourth month the saint himself submits to be bathed in effigy for the edification of the faithful, who testify their zeal by pouring handfuls of cash on his brazen forehead.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE WAR.

SINCE the preceding chapters were written a war has broken out between China and Japan, which promises to be productive of far-reaching consequences. It has brought prominently before the world the fact that in Eastern Asia a great military power has arisen, the very existence of which was until now almost entirely overlooked, and it has proved up to the hilt the opinion expressed in the Preface to the first edition of the present work, that the Chinese "empire is pre-eminently one of make-believe." The objects sought to be obtained by the combatants are diametrically opposite the one from the other. The Chinese policy, if policy it can be called, has been to preserve a shadowy suzerainty over Korea, and to allow everything else to drift by the board. The Japanese, on the other hand, have had very definite views with regard to the peninsula. They recognize that, in its present disorganized and chaotic condition, it might readily become a prey at any moment to the Russians, who are separated from it only by a stream; and the idea of having a European power, and especially one who, rightly or wrongly, is credited by Japan with actively aggressive intentions, within sight of their shores,

is regarded by them as a direct menace. For some years they have been using their best endeavours so to strengthen Korea by introducing reforms into the administration as to enable her to hold her own in case of attack by her northern neighbour. To all such reforms China has opposed an obstinate resistance—a resistance which on two occasions was instrumental in producing riots and disturbances in the capital.

It has long been recognized, by all those acquainted with Eastern affairs, that the strained relations thus existing between China and Japan with regard to Korea would inevitably in the end lead to war, and the constant succession of disturbances which have become almost chronic in the peninsula, and which lately called for the fulfilment of the article of the treaty of 1885, by which it was declared competent for both states to send troops into the country for the restoration of order, seemed likely to herald the event, unless very carefully handled. A condition was attached by treaty to the agreement which brought the forces of the two countries face to face. One power was not to despatch troops without giving due notice to the other. On this occasion the Chinese, with that haughty disregard for the rights of foreigners which distinguishes them, shipped an army to Korea without giving any intimation of their intention to the court at Tōkiō. When national feelings run high, any step taken which may be regarded as a slight may easily precipitate an appeal to arms. At this time, however, it happened that the peace-party in Japan were clamouring so loudly for a reduction of the army and navy, and were urging so persistently

on the government the advisability of pursuing a more directly pacific policy, that China fully believed that the Japanese were not in a position to call her to account for any delinquency of which she might be guilty.

The contempt with which the Chinese diplomatists have always regarded the Japanese has blinded them to the necessity of carefully gauging the currents of public opinion, and of estimating at their true value the martial characteristics of the people. They therefore entirely misled their government as to the very strong feeling possessed by the Japanese with regard to Korea, and even when the Japanese landed a force at Chemulpo as a counter-blast to the Chinese expedition, the emperor's advisers were still under the impression that there was no danger of war. But, divided though the Japanese were in matters of domestic policy, they were as one man in their determination to upset the Chinese dominion in the peninsula. They had already, and the other nations had followed in their wake, made a treaty with the king in which they had recognized him as an independent sovereign, and in pursuance of this same policy they had constantly urged him to accept a new constitution for the government of his kingdom. They did not, however, entirely ignore the Chinese pretensions in framing these schemes, but invited the government at Peking to act with them in supporting the king in the progressive policy proposed. To this suggestion the Chinese returned a *non possumus*. They declared that, since China was the suzerain state, the initiative of all reform should come from her, rather than from Japan; and, being still under the impression

that the Mikado's government would not fight, they adopted a haughty tone in the negotiations, and formulated certain proposals, one of which was that Japan should forthwith withdraw her ships from all Chinese ports. As if further to complicate matters, they fixed the 20th of July as the last date for receiving notice of compliance with their demands. This was rightly regarded as an ultimatum by the Japanese, who, however, still showed a conciliatory spirit and accepted the proposals with certain modifications. At the same time, they gave full and explicit notice that any advance of the Chinese naval and military forces would be considered as an act of war.

Long acquaintance with the Chinese methods of procedure prompted the Japanese so far to doubt the *bona fides* of their opponents as to keep an active watch on the Gulf of Pechihli. The event proved that this watchfulness was well called for. On the morning of the twenty-fifth of July three Japanese cruisers, the *Akitsusu*, *Yoshino*, and the *Naniwa*, encountered a Chinese transport, convoyed by three men-of-war steaming from Taku in the direction of Asan (*Sinice* Yashan), in Korea. This was plainly a breach of the understanding arrived at between the two governments, and the Japanese commander at once engaged the Chinese ships. After discharging a torpedo or two, the *Tsi-yuen* and the *Kwanshi*, two of the Chinese war-ships, took to flight, pursued by the *Yoshino* and *Akitsusu*, leaving the *Naniwa* to try conclusions with the transport, which proved to be the British ship *Kowshing*. As resistance was hopeless, the *Kowshing*, in obedience to a signal from the *Naniwa*, came to an anchor.

A Japanese officer then boarded the vessel, and, after examining the ship's papers, ordered the captain to bring his vessel in the wake of the *Naniwa* to the coast of Japan. This the captain refused to do, on the ground that the Chinese troops would not allow him to surrender. With this message the officer returned to the *Naniwa*, when shortly afterwards a signal was hoisted on that ship bidding the captain of the *Kowshing* to "leave the steamer immediately." Again the captain reported that the Chinese troops would neither allow him to surrender nor leave the ship. After one more warning, the *Naniwa*, seeing further parleying useless, hoisted a red flag, and opened fire on the transport. Then succeeded a scene which baffles description. The foreigners leaped overboard, and the troops, who numbered eleven hundred men, went mad with fear and rage. They fired at the European officers in the water, and even upon one another, and finally went down in the ship.

After this a declaration of war followed as a natural consequence. The Japanese declaration was concise and to the point; while the Chinese, as is their custom, issued a bombastic document, in which they claimed complete suzerainty over Korea, and affirmed that Japan had illegitimately sent troops into the peninsula. The edict further wound up by ordering the viceroys and commanders of the forces to "root out the pestilent Japanese from their lairs without delay." The disproportion between the size and populations of the two empires was so great, that at the opening of the war it was the general opinion that, even if Japan were able to win a few initial battles, the superior weight of the

Celestial Empire must inevitably crush her battalions out of existence. Events, however, have plainly shown that the views of those who held an opposite opinion were well justified. From the very first the contrast between the military preparations of the two nations pointed to the result which was to follow. While the Japanese flocked to the standards well armed, well accoutred, and well drilled, the raw recruits which were picked up in highways and byways by Chinese commanders were obviously fit only to be food for powder, even supposing that they could be persuaded to advance within reach of the enemy's guns at all. One of the first precautionary measures taken by Li Hungchang was to reinforce the Taku forts, but so half-hearted were his troops, that even in the short space of thirty-six miles between Tientsin and Taku so many deserted that he was obliged to have recourse to wholesale executions in order to preserve even a semblance of discipline in the ranks.

But the superiority of the Japanese was not confined to the men. From the first the Chinese were out-generalled. Almost immediately after the declaration of war the Mikado's forces effected a landing at Asan, a fortified place on the west coast of Korea. The town was occupied by Chinese troops under the command of General Yeh, who, in face of the invading regiments, performed one of those strategic movements for which the Chinese are famous. In 1860, when the allied forces landed for the attack on the Taku forts, Sankolinsin reported with triumph to the throne that he had lured them on shore in order more surely and effectively to destroy

them. In the same truly martial spirit, Yeh allowed the Japanese to land, and then withdrew the bulk of his forces, leaving only a small detachment in charge of his stores and munitions of war. By this manœuvre he was able, it is true, to form a junction with the main Chinese body at Ping Yang, on the north of Seoul—a success for which he was loudly commended by his compatriots, and for which he received approval from the Dragon throne; but the immediate result of which was that the Japanese (July 29) easily disposed of his rear-guard, captured the baggage of his army, and marched unopposed to the capital.

Meanwhile the Chinese battalions had been converging towards Ping-Yang. The first to march to that centre was General Tso, at the head of troops from Mukden. This division was received with open arms by the Koreans, who refused to acccept the pay offered by Tso for the provisions which they supplied. The next division to arrive at the frontier was commanded by a man of quite another calibre to Tso. General Wei was a fellow-provincial with Li-Hungchang, and unfortunately inherited all the worst traditions of Chinese official life. On leaving Tientsin, for the front, three months' extra pay for his troops had been handed to him. The temptation was too great to be resisted. He left part of the money under his own name at Tientsin, and took the balance to supply the wants of his troops. The result was that when his men marched into Wiju (*Sinice* Ichou), they were penniless and starving. The proffered hospitality of the Koreans was accepted as a right, and the soldiers, not satisfied with what was given willingly, took what they

wanted with greed and violence. Wei was a man who adopted to the full the Napoleonic principle that war should support war, and, far from checking the pillaging propensities of his men, he allowed them full scope to do as they pleased. A brigade of Kirin cavalry who crossed the frontier about the same time behaved as badly or even worse, if it were possible, than Wei's detachment had done. They ruthlessly robbed the natives, and left a legacy of hate behind them which will long endure. There was, however, one advantage about this system. It compelled the troops to move on, as the country became exhausted. And so it came about that without any great loss of time these three divisions joined hands at Ping-Yang. There they were met by the redoubtable Yeh, who, in virtue of his strategic abilities, had been named commander-in-chief.

At this time three Japanese divisions were converging on the same centre. One from Gensan (*Sinice* Yuanshan), on the east coast of Korea, commanded by Tatsumi; another from Piongsan (*Sinice* Pingshan) on the south, commanded by Oshima; and a third from Hwang-ju (*Sinice* Hwangchow), on the west coast, commanded by Nodzu. General Tso, recognizing the critical nature of the situation, urged Yeh to strengthen the outworks of the stronghold; but that great strategist refused until it was too late, and the Japanese army, with scarcely any opposition, marched up to the walls of the town. Early in the morning of the 15th of September the three Japanese divisions, with admirable precision, took up their positions before the doomed city, and immediately opened an attack. The troops

under Tso, led in person by that chief, fought well and bravely; but Yeh, true to his instincts, led off his division through the north gate on the pretence of encountering the enemy, and then fled precipitately northwards in the direction of Wiju. Not to be behindhand in following the example of so great a manœuvrer, Wei, some hours later, followed in the same direction, but with disastrous results. The northern passes, which had been clear of the enemy when Yeh passed through, were now occupied by the Japanese. A third of Wei's brigade were killed by the fusilade poured upon them in the passes; and the cavalry division, which sought to save themselves by the same line of retreat, were shot down almost to the last man. Tso and his subordinate Ma were thus left to bear the brunt of the battle. They did all that men could do, but were eventually utterly routed, and the city fell into the hands of the victors. The slaughter was great, and Tso was among the dead. It must be some consolation to Tso's relatives to know that both Wei and the strategist Yeh, after having been stripped of their peacock's feathers and all other insignia of honour, were summoned to Peking to answer to the charges of treachery and cowardice, and that Wei has already expiated his offences on the scaffold.

The sound of the guns at Ping-Yang had scarcely ceased, when an engagement, which was destined to settle the naval supremacy of the two nations was fought at the mouth of the Yalu river, which marks the frontier between Korea and Manchuria. A large Chinese force had been ordered to be conveyed in transports from Taku

to the Yalu, for the purpose of reinforcing the troops at Ping-Yang. It was known that the Japanese fleet was cruising in the gulf, and it was therefore considered necessary to safeguard the transports with a large convoy. As a matter of fact, the whole of the Peiyang fleet escorted them on the voyage. They reached the Yalu in safety, and were engaged in landing the troops when, on the morning of the 17th of September, the Japanese fleet was seen approaching. The forces were about equal. The Chinese had twelve ships of war, viz. the *Ting-yuan*, the *Chen-yuan*, the *Chih-yuan*, the *Ching-yuan*, the *Lai-yuan*, the *King-yuan*, the *Tsi-yuan*, the *Ping-yuan*, the *Chao-yung*, the *Yang-wei*, the *Kwang-kai*, and the *Kwang-ping*. Facing these were the following ships bearing the Japanese ensign: the *Yoshino*, the *Matsushima* carrying Admiral Ito's flag, the *Itsukushima*, the *Hashidate*, the *Naniwa*, the *Takachiho*, the *Akitsushima*, the *Hiyei*, the *Fuso*, the *Akagi*, and the *Saikio-Maru*. So soon as the Japanese hove in sight, the Chinese Admiral Ting gave the order to join battle, and adopted the V-shape formation for the attack. The Japanese fleet, which advanced in a single line, at once took advantage of this blunder, and steamed round and round the Chinese fleet, choosing their points of attack as the occasions arose, and always keeping at such a distance as to enable them to make the best use of their quickfiring guns, and to avoid so far as possible the heavier and slower artillery of the Chinese. Both sides fought well, but the Chinese were completely outmanœuvred, and as darkness fell they took to flight, having lost five ships in the engagement. The *Chih-yuan* and the

Lai-yuan foundered during the battle, and the *Chao-yung*, the *Yang-wei*, and the *Kwang-kai* were stranded and destroyed. The Japanese flagship, the *Hiyei*, and the *Akagi* were all seriously damaged, but not one was lost. The remnant of the Chinese fleet sought refuge at Port Arthur, where Admiral Ting and his captains amused themselves by quarrelling over the causes of the disaster, which included among others the abstention from the fight of the *Ping-yuan* and the *Kwang-ping*, the captains of which vessels were charged with having retreated up the Yalu when the battle began, and of having stayed there until the firing had ceased. This blow was decisive so far as the Chinese navy was concerned, and the Japanese fleets have since been allowed to roam at will over the high seas without any danger of being interfered with by the ships of the Son of Heaven.

Meanwhile the Japanese Marshal Yamagata, who had commanded at Ping-Yang, followed up the retreating Chinese northwards, and entered Wiju on the 8th of October without having met with any serious resistance, Yeh and Wei having, for strategic purposes, crossed the Yalu into Manchuria. The Chinese troops had thus been completely driven out of Korea; but they might have limited the advance of the Japanese to the frontier of that kingdom if they had adequately defended the very strong position which they occupied on the north bank of the Yalu. The same fatality however, which had overtaken them at Asan and Ping-Yang followed them here also. The Japanese easily outmanœuvred them, and instead of crossing opposite Wiju, where the Chinese were expecting

them, they effected a landing ten miles further up the river without meeting with any opposition. This was on the 24th of October, and on the following day General Nodzu gained a signal victory at Hushan, routing and scattering the Chinese occupying force of three thousand five hundred men.

The bands of fugitives who preserved any semblance of order retreated across the Ai river to Chiulien, one of the strongest fortresses in Southern Manchuria. The Japanese, under General Tatsumi, pressed hotly in pursuit of the flying Chinamen, and while the general himself and Colonel Sato, an officer who had distinguished himself at Ping-Yang, took up a position northward of the city so as to threaten the line of retreat, Field-marshal Yamagata advanced from the south towards the stronghold. A heavy cannonade was kept up by the Chinese from the walls of the town during the night of the 26th, and in the morning the Japanese advanced to the attack, which they expected would have been fiercely resisted. But the movements of Tatsumi and Sato had so alarmed the Chinese, that, under cover of the fire from the walls, they had evacuated the city during the night. One thing Chinese troops always long for, and that is to have a line of retreat kept open for them. The idea of fighting in a *cul de sac* upsets their nerves completely, and on this occasion they determined to fly from the city at night, hoping to escape the vigilance of Tatsumi and Sato under the cover of darkness. Soon after daylight, Yamagata presented himself before the walls, and, to his infinite surprise, found the city deserted. The capture of

this fortress was no barren victory. The flight of the Chinese had been so precipitate that they had only taken with them such things as they could carry in their hands ; and thus, without having fired a shot, the Japanese became possessed of twenty-two guns, three hundred tents, large stores of ammunition, and quantities of grain and forage. The garrison, which had numbered about sixteen thousand men, moved off in full retreat in the direction of Fênghwang Ch'êng ("the Phœnix city"), a town about thirty-five miles from Chiulien. Fênghwang is the most important town in South-Eastern Manchuria, and is the only seriously fortified place between Chiulien and Mukden.

Without a moment's delay, General Tatsumi followed on the trail of the retreating Chinese, and on the 31st appeared before the walls of Fênghwang. But the enemy had become by this time utterly demoralized, and, without having waited even for the sight of their foe, had evacuated the town. A Japanese official telegram, dated Chiulien, November 3, states that after the occupation of Fênghwang, "our captures up to date are fifty-five cannon, fifteen hundred small arms, together with about twenty thousand rounds of ammunition for artillery, and about two million five hundred thousand for small arms. A large quantity of other war material was also taken." At such a rate the Chinese army must soon become defenceless, and the decreasing appetite which they have shown for fight is possibly due to the enormous loss of arms which they have sustained. But another factor may also have had its influence. A large proportion of the arms and ammunition served out to the men has been

notoriously inefficient. It has been reported, and there is no reason to doubt the rumour, that one of Li Hungchang's most trusted lieutenants, when commissioned to purchase arms, bought the most obsolete weapons he could pick up, as being the cheapest, and accompanied them with stores of ammunition which bore no relation to the rifles for which they were intended. Mrs. Bishop, in a recent letter from Mukden, has described how the Chinese recruits fitted the cartridges to their rifles from the stores of ammunition which lay in heaps by the roadside. The way of the Chinese soldier is hard. His generals, as a rule, are ignorant and incapable, and, what is even worse, are thoroughly corrupt. If his life is not sacrificed to incapacity, it is given away to fill the pockets of his leaders, who, with cynical indifference, regard the reduction of the number of men who are in a position to demand pay as a distinct advantage to their pockets.

After the capture of Fênghwang, the Chinese, under the command of General Sung, partook themselves to the Mot'ienling ("the pass which rubs against the sky"—so named from its great height), and there entrenched themselves against the enemy. The Chinese, while compelled to confess that on the field of battle the Japanese are their masters, have confidently looked forward to the winter cold and snows of Manchuria as their most effective defences against the invaders. By the irony of fate, however, the tables have been turned, and while the bulk of the Japanese forces are occupying the cities and villages, the fugitive Chinese are driven to passes which "rub against the sky." Even there, however, they are not allowed to remain

undisturbed, and the Japanese column has already dislodged them from their mountain fastness, and, having occupied Liaoyang, is now in full march on Niuchwang.

On the same day that Marshal Yamagata's troops crossed the Yalu (October 24), General Oyama landed with the second Japanese army on the Kinchou peninsula. It will be remembered that some sixty or seventy miles northward of Port Arthur the Liaotung peninsula narrows to a neck at a point a little to the south of Kinchou, and widens out again into a hilly region which culminates to a height of fifteen hundred feet in the neighbourhood of Port Arthur. Talienwan, which was the bay in which the allied forces rendezvoused in 1860 before the attack on the Taku forts, was the place chosen by the Japanese for the landing. They met with no opposition in their disembarkation, and without loss of time undertook the preparatory operations which had been marked out for them. On the 5th and 6th of November they captured the fortified posts of Talien and Kinchou, and thus, having secured their rear, were at liberty to begin their march over the rugged country which separated them from Port Arthur. A Chinese road connects Kinchou with the extreme point of the peninsula, but those who are acquainted with Chinese roads will recognize that this can have been but little advantage to the invaders for the transport of guns. With the businesslike indomitable perseverance, however, which has distinguished the Japanese operations during the whole war, General Oyama set his face southward. His progress was necessarily slow over the rugged and hilly country

through which he had to pass. But on the 20th of November his forces were in position for the attack. At noon of that day he opened a heavy fire on the defences, and on the 21st carried the place by storm. The fighting, especially in the outlying forts, was severe; but, as is always the case with the Chinese, these having been taken, the main position was but feebly defended. The fleet took no part in the capture, but as the troops advanced against the heights in the rear, a fleet of torpedo-boats created a diversion by charging into the harbour in a body. Up to this time the discipline of the Japanese troops had been excellent, and no barbarities whatever—even under provocative circumstances—had been committed by them. But the sights which met their eyes when they fought their way into the town at Port Arthur overcame all restraints, and brought out the savage side of the Asiatic character. They found the remains of their countrymen who had been taken prisoners mutilated and defaced in the most inhuman and brutal fashion. The spectacle was too much for their reserve. The principle of an eye for an eye usurped the place of military discipline, and with savage fury they revenged the cruelties committed on their countrymen by a wholesale slaughter. The officers did all they could do to stop the outrages, and a commission was subsequently appointed to inquire into the matter and to punish the guilty parties.

The fall of Port Arthur was a crushing blow to the Chinese. It was their strongest naval depôt, and practically commanded, in the hands of a strong naval power, the Gulf of Pechihli. At first the Chinese authorities attempted to conceal the news

of the disaster. It was vigorously asserted throughout the provinces that the report of the capture of the fortress was a malicious invention, and that it was still held by twenty thousand of the best Chinese troops. There is reason to believe that even the emperor was deceived on this point for a time. But the fact had to be admitted at last, with the result that the military and civil officials in command of the place were summoned to Peking, to answer for its loss.

The capture of Port Arthur was, however, only an incident in the campaign, and General Oyama had no sooner effectively garrisoned the place than he started northwards with his remaining available forces, to effect a juncture with General Nodzu in Manchuria. In rapid succession he took Fuchou and Kaip'ingchou on the coast-line, and by last accounts (December 25) was marching on Niuchwang, there to join hands with the victorious Nodzu. Meanwhile the succession of reverses which the Chinese troops had met with had inclined the emperor's court to sue for peace. Those who have read the preceding chapter on the war of 1860 will be prepared to be told that the emperor's advisers adopted every pretext and employed every device to entrap the Japanese into negotiations which must inevitably have led to delay, without in any way necessarily binding the emperor to any conditions. Soon after the war first broke out they had the effrontery to propose a month's armistice. When this suggestion was scouted by the Japanese, they attempted to enlist the services of the foreign ministers at Peking in their favour. Unfortunately, with that subserviency to the Chinese which the

European Powers have always shown, they were partially successful, with the inevitable result, however, that the foreign ministers were snubbed for their pains, without in any way having influenced the course of the campaign. Another device was therefore necessary, and Mr. Detring, the Commissioner of Customs at Tientsin, was despatched to Tōkiō to open negotiations on the part of the Chinese. It is almost incredible, but it is a fact, that this officer was sent on his mission without holding any plenipotentiary powers whatever, his only credential being a letter addressed by Li Hung-chang to Count Ito, the prime minister. With proper wisdom, Count Ito refused even to receive so flimsy an envoy, and Mr. Detring returned to him who sent him, without having seen the official with whom the Chinese in their folly had intended him to treat. It is now stated that Chang, a member of the Tsungli Yamun, has been appointed as special ambassador, with full plenipotentiary powers. Chang is said to be a man of ability and of conciliatory bearing, and it is possible that his mission may be successful, but the Chinese would appear almost to have set themselves to wreck the venture. In the first place, they appointed as assistant ambassador a man named Shao, who was lately Governor of Formosa, and who distinguished himself in that post by offering rewards for Japanese heads ; and, further, they have taken no pains to conceal the facts that they are negotiating for the purchase of the Chilian navy, and are making energetic efforts to enlist German commissioned and non-commissioned officers for service with the army. In these circumstances, the

Mikado's advisers, while agreeing to receive the emissaries, have intimated plainly their suspicion that China is not serious in her desire for peace.

What the future course of the campaign may be remains to be seen, but there can be no doubt that the war will ultimately result in the general opening up of China to foreign trade and intercourse. The advantages which this prospect holds out to Western nations are sufficiently obvious, and to the Chinese themselves the change will bring a full measure of good, since with the advent of light and leading the mists of corruption, oppression, and wrong which now lie "as black as Acheron" over the land, must infallibly melt away, and the down-trodden people will begin to breathe again in an atmosphere of increasing freedom and prosperity.

THE END.

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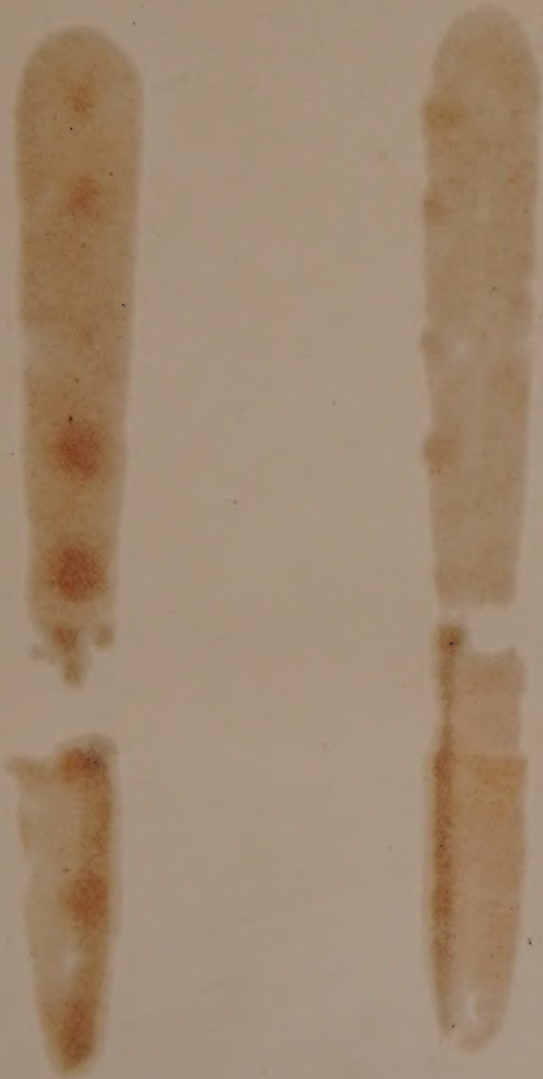

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